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MARTIN FABER,

THE STORY OF A CRIMINAL;

AND OTHER TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS,"
"MELLICHAMPE," &c.

William Gilmore Simms

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1837.

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TO MY DAUGHTER—

TO ONE WHO, AS YET, CAN UNDERSTAND LITTLE SAVE HIS LOVE, THESE VOLUMES ARE FONDLY DEDICATED, WITH ALL THE AFFECTIONS OF

HER FATHER.

PREFATORY SONNET.

Divided from my child a thousand miles,
A thousand trials keep us still apart,
And, ere again her eye upon me smiles,
Cold, in a foreign grave, may sleep my heart.
Such is the fate which now my fortune dares—
And should she lose me—young and desolate one—
Number her fondly, Father! with thy cares,
Spare her the many trials I have known.
And, stranger! thou wilt sacred hold her name,—
Thou'lt watch above her childhood with a word
Of kindness, that may soften even thy blame,
Such as she ever from her sire hath heard.
Be thy reprovings gentle—wrong her not
With dark entreaty; but, as some young flower
The very winds should worship, guard her lot,
Give her thy love, and shield her with thy power.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE story of "MARTIN FABER" was published two years ago—it was published under some few disadvantages. It happened to be put forth shortly after the appearance of a book called "Miserrimus," and, unhappily, it was soon found that a monstrous family likeness existed between the two performances. The coincidences were numerous. "Miserrimus" told his own story —so did "Martin." The one was a tale of crime—so was the other. The one was published by Harper and Brothers—so was the other. The one filled about two hundred pages—so did the other. And, more unlucky yet, the same style of printing and binding was chosen for both publications. After this, the identity became too striking to escape the eyes of many, who dwelt learnedly upon the likeness. It was a burning shame to copy at all—so they said—and then for the American to copy after the Englishman! Patriots, too, had much to say on this latter subject.

As an offset to these coincidences, when we say, that, in no incident of "Martin Faber" could any resemblance be discovered to the supposed prototype—that the motives of action, and the influences governing the two, were entirely different—that the one was desultory

and without a plan, and the other had both plan and purpose—that the one, perhaps, never, or scarcely ever, lived, and that the other, unhappily for our country, has, of late years, become a character too common to create surprise—when we say this, and, in addition, say, that the moral, under deliberate and just criticism, must be considered decidedly in favour of the American story, the reader will probably suspect that the likeness between the two works is not so very striking after all.

What is that moral? This question suggests another matter of complaint with some of the critics, who have done the work the honour to pronounce, if not a judgment, at least a sentence upon it. The moral has been objected to, and, strange to say, none of those, so objecting, have condescended to state what it is, or to designate their grounds of objection to it. They have generally sheltered themselves under the convenient *ipse dixit* of that venerable father of the art, whom they will do wisely never to forget, and who says—with a complaisance not restrained to his own time—

> "I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
> The reason why, &c.
> But," &c.

In the first edition of "Martin Faber," the Advertisement which prefaced it ran thus:—

"The work which follows is submitted with great deference, and some doubt, to the reader. It is an experiment; and the style and spirit are, it is believed, somewhat out of the beaten track. The events are of real occurrence, and, to the judgment of the author, the peculiarities of character which he has here drawn—

if they may be considered such, which are somewhat too common to human society—are genuine and unexaggerated. The design of the work is purely moral, and the lessons sought to be inculcated are of universal application and importance. They go to impress upon us the necessity of proper and early education—they show the ready facility with which the best natural powers may be perverted to the worst purposes—they stimulate to honourable deeds in the young, teach firmness under defeat and vicissitude, and hold forth a promise of ultimate and complete success to well directed perseverance. By exhibiting, at the same time, the injurious consequences directly flowing from each and every aberration from the standard of a scrupulous morality, they enjoin the strictest and most jealous conscientiousness. The character of Martin Faber, not less than that of William Harding, may be found hourly in real life. The close observer may often meet with them. They are here put in direct opposition, not less with the view to contrast and comparison, than incident and interest. They will be found to develop, of themselves, and by their results, the nature of the education which had been severally given them. When the author speaks of education, he does not so much refer to that received at the school and the academy. He would be understood to indicate that which the young acquire at home in the parental dwelling—under the parental eye—in the domestic circle—at the family fireside—from those who, by nature, are best calculated to lay the guiding and the governing principles. It is not at the university that the affections and the moral faculties are to be tutored. The heart, and the smaller morals—the manners—have

quite another school and other teachers, all of which are but too little considered by the guardians of the young. These are the father, and the mother, and the friends—the playmates, and the play-places."

It will be seen from this, that the author somewhat earnestly insisted upon his moral. He thought it highly valuable, and, in his estimation, it was evidently meant to do great things. How it came, after this, that the book was immoral, has created as much surprise in his mind, as, doubtless, it must have created in many of those who subsequently read it. Two years have elapsed since its first publication, and many have been the criticisms, pro and con, which have been written upon the work; yet is he incorrigible enough to aver, that he does not yet perceive where the moral fails. This confession may shock some and astonish others—it is proof of inveteracy somewhere, certainly; but, as the modest adventurer, liable to suspicion, is apt to say in the newspapers, let us beg that, for a while at least, "public opinion may be suspended."

The story of "Martin Faber" is an exceedingly simple one, and one that occurs more frequently than the wellbred gentleman of city life is apt to imagine. He tells his own story, and appears, according to his own account, as, in great part, the victim of parental perversion. He is a selfish and wanton criminal, as persons, so situated in infancy and childhood, are very apt to become. Every now and then, in his narrative, the reason—the true cause—the parent germe of his error and his crime—is permitted to appear. His doings are atrocious;—that is to say, he is a winner of the love, and a violater of his faith with woman—he is a liar and a murderer. There is nothing, surely, uncommon, how-

ever unnatural, in these offences. This nature is, after all, a curious matter. We may define it, not to be paradoxical, as the very creature of art—remarkable for its imitation, for its ingenuity, for its facile susceptibility to all early impressions. We make what we call the nature, from the plastic material so put before us, and this is education. To commit murder is unnatural, strictly speaking; but, in the sense of the word, as adopted in common parlance, it is not unnatural. Martin Faber is not unnatural—you may see him daily. He walks London with audacity, where, we are told, there are five thousand persons well disposed to defy the laws, and cut your throat, for a shilling. We see him in New-York, in Massachusetts, at Mobile and New-Orleans—that is to say, if the newspapers do not lie, and if citizens are not hung frequently without a reason. The character, unhappily for humanity, is but too common to be considered altogether unnatural.

The only difference between the narrative of crime given in "Martin Faber," and that furnished by the newspapers daily, consists in this little particular. The author of the work has striven to trace it to its causes—to describe its sources—to probe the wound, and to declare its depth. He aimed to show the steps by which erroneous principle rises from indulgence, and becomes the parent of fierce will, unbending passion, and law-defying excess. All the offences which the criminal usually commits against society, are studiously thrown together—not to attract, but to discourage and deter. The mind of the reader is shocked with that man, in his true colours, as a monster, whom he not unfrequently shakes hands with, as a fellow-citizen, in the street. Nobody sympathizes with

him in his progress—nobody deplores his fate, which is that of the detected felon. The virtuous triumph—the vicious are overthrown. It is shown that all his evils spring from his errors; it is shown that the good fortune which attends the good, results from their adherence to principle. What more is wanted for morality? There is no single scene in the whole narrative, calculated, by its voluptuousness, to offend a delicate sense, or to entice a weak one; on the contrary, the colouring of the volume—the moral colouring throughout, even where the grosser events are narrated—is that which precedes the thunder-storm—that wild, cloud-compelling aspect, which, to the well-regulated mind, would have all the effect of warning and discouragement. The author was careful, in all the work, that the crimes of the chief actor in it, should be without any of those enjoyments, to him, which might be supposed to have attracted him, and which might lead others to the same excesses. He labours up the steeps of sin—he plucks the fruit from the forbidden tree—and his reward is blight and ashes. He lives in fear and hate—distrusting and distrusted—and he dies with the fullest consciousness that there is nothing of hope for him in the future, and nothing of grateful recollection for him in the past. No smiles receive him—no tears lament him—none weep above his tomb.

It has been objected, in "Martin Faber," that his occasional references to the vague notion of fatality, have an injurious tendency—but I see not this. It is only another error of his education. It matters not much to the public what may be the opinions of the outlaw. He may think what he pleases, and do little harm, until that period shall arrive—which, from some

aspects in the moral world, would seem not so very far off—when we shall take our models from the gallows, and sanctify to our children the fame of the cut-throat and the felon. On this subject we may remark, that it is the stale cant of the detected criminal, always to ascribe to an agency beyond his own, the crimes for which he is about to suffer. Nobody, who reads criminal confessions, but must have seen how frequent are such references; and nothing is more true to nature—the nature even of the outcast—than that he should thus, when hope has failed, seek this form of palliation before the public, for those offences which his conscience yet teaches him are beyond excuse. An instance occurs of this sort in the lying narrative of Vaux—James Hardy Vaux—in whose memoirs the reader may find it. In "Martin Faber" it makes no part of the story; and the unmeaning phrases—for they amount to nothing more—which he utters on this subject, were solely employed to preserve the truth of portraiture. It is melancholy to think, as we pause and listen to such confessions as have here been spoken of, how strangely the mind seems to delight, even when there is no apparent necessity for it, in its own self-deception; though we must feel that such deceit, when uttered by the criminal, conveys, of itself, no small compliment to that predominant virtue in the community, which he feels acting upon him all the time, and of which he is conscious, when too late, that he has been the unwise enemy.

In conclusion, and to refer again to the supposed resemblance of "Martin Faber" to "Miserrimus," we may add, that the chief incidents of the former work were first published in the Southern Literary Gazette, a

periodical put forth in Charleston, South Carolina, about seven years ago. It filled some eight or ten pages in the second volume of that journal, where the reader, if curious, will find it. From the paper entitled, "Confessions of a Murderer," the work was subsequently elaborated—partly in 1829, partly in 1832, and finally revised for publication in 1833, when it appeared in its present form. In the process of elaboration, new persons and new events received their existence. Thus, the character of William Harding, which does not appear in the original production, was introduced, and all the softening and gentler features of the work were the fruit of an after labour. The sterner, darker features of the story—those in their nature most resembling "Miserrimus," were all conceived in the first instance, and nearly all of them appear in the story as it was first given to the public, in the shape of a contribution to a monthly magazine.

MARTIN FABER.

"And thus hath been my strife—unbroken, long,
My care of being. There can be no foe
Like that which follows, and is born of guilt."

CHAPTER I.

This is a fearful precipice, but I dare look upon it. What, indeed, may I not dare—what have I not dared! I look before me, and, but for that awful strife—that gross exposure—the hissing scorn—the deriding shout—but for these, the prospect of death, terrible to all men, would have few or no terrors for me. Without adopting too greatly the spirit of cant which makes it a familiar phrase in the mouths of the many, death to me will prove a release from numberless strifes and trials. I do not fear death. Why should I fear that which I may not avoid? I look behind me, and the survey of my crimes, and of the past, however I may regret many of them, and much of it, at least brings with it no

fears of the future, and but few compunctious visitings. They were among the occurrences known to, and the necessary sequence in the progress of, time and the world's circumstance. They might have been committed by another as well as by myself. They must have been committed! I was but an instrument in the hands of a power with which I could not contend.

Yet, what a prospect does this backward glance afford! How full of colours and characters—how curiously dark and bright! I am dazzled and confounded at the various phases of my own life. I wonder at the prodigious strides which my own feet have taken; and—as I live and must die, I am bold to declare—in half the number of instances without my own consciousness. Should I be considered the criminal in deeds so committed? Had not my arm been impelled—had not my mood been prompted—by powers and an agency apart from my own, I had not struck the blow—I had not scorned the supposed obligation—I had not rejected the terms upon which society tendered me its protection. The demon was not of me, though presiding over, and prevailing within me. Let those who can think when the blood is boiling in their temples, analyze.

its throbs and the source of its impulses—let the skin-dried ascetic, withered over the map and the crucible, undertake the examination as he may. I cannot—I dare not. The life which was given me had a different direction, and I had no right to defeat its purposes. I am a fatalist. Enough for me that it was written!

My name is MARTIN FABER. I am the only son of German parents—people of good family, and, so far as paying their debts, and not flying in the face of society could make them so, very good sort of people. I was born in the village of M——, a little settlement of some sixty or seventy families, of quiet habits, and not very brilliant minds. The Fabers were the first among them in fortune and respectability; and, possessed of a strong, shrewd, and somewhat improved sense, my father, Nicholas Faber, contrived, after no very long period, to make himself the first man in the village, which was one of those that, having attained a certain growth, always after remain stationary. It stagnated accordingly; and such being the case, the prospect was exceedingly remote of a diminution in the influence of our family. On the con-

trary, my father, each successive day, grew more and more supreme in the estimation of the people. He was the only active principle among them. He did their thinking, and they were very willing to depute to him a labour so excessively unpopular—not to say undemocratic. He was their oracle—their counsellor: his word was law, and there were no rival pretensions set up in opposition to his supremacy. Would this had been less the case! Had Nicholas Faber been more his own than the creature of others, Martin, his son, had not now obliterated all the good impressions of his family, and been called upon, not only to recount his own disgrace and crime, but to pay its penalties. Had he bestowed more of his time upon the regulation of his household, and less upon public affairs, the numberless vicious propensities, strikingly marked in me from childhood up, had most probably been sufficiently restrained. But it was fated that such should not have been the case. It was decreed that he should neglect or mislead, and that I should be misled. As I have already said—it was written!

The only child, I was necessarily the favourite. The pet of mamma, the prodigy of papa, I was permitted to dogmatize and do as I pleased from my

earliest infancy. I grew apace, but in compliance with maternal tenderness, which dreaded the premature exposure of the child's nerves, health, and sensibilities, I was withheld from school for some time after other children are put in charge of a tutor. In the mean time I had the freedom of the common, and, indeed, a common freedom in the indulgence of my own moods and passions. When sent to school, the matter was not greatly mended. I learned nothing, or what I learned was entirely obliterated by the nature of my education and treatment at home. I cared little to learn, and my tutor dared not coerce me. He was intelligent, and well taught—a man versed in the abstruser sciences; but wanting in decision and independence of character, the most necessary attributes of one in his vocation. This want was fatal to his usefulness; and Michael Andrews—for that was the name he bore—was, accordingly, but a tool—a poor, miserable hireling, who, having a large and depending family, dared not offend by the chastisement of the favourite son of a person of so much consequence as my father. Whatever I said or did, therefore, went by without notice, and with the most perfect impunity. I was a truant, and exulted in my irregularities, without the fear or pros-

pect of punishment. I was brutal and boorish—savage and licentious. To inferiors I was wantonly cruel. In my connection with superiors, I was cunning and hypocritical. If, wanting in physical strength, I dared not break ground and go to blows with my opponent, I nevertheless yielded not, except in appearance. I waited for my time, and seldom permitted the opportunity to escape, in which I could revenge myself, with tenfold interest, for provocation or injustice. Nor did I stop to inquire at any time whether it was injustice or not to which I had been subjected. I had no desire to discriminate nicely into the merits of my treatment. It was enough for me that my pride or my passion had been mortified—I sought equally for my atonement. To all, alike, I carried the same countenance. It mattered not to me to whom these features were exhibited; and as for concealment, that was only my resort when cunning counselled, and as it became necessary to my purpose. To the servant, the schoolmaster, the citizen, and, even to my parents, I was rude and insolent. My defiance was ready for them all; and when, as sometimes was the case, even at the most early stages of childhood, I passed beyond those bounds of toleration assigned to my conduct, tacitly,

as it were, by my father and mother, my only rebuke was in some such miserably unmeaning language as this—"Now, my dear—now, Martin, how can you be so bad?"—or, "I will be vexed with you, Martin, if you go on so."

What were such rebukes to an overgrown boy, to whom continued and most unvarying deference, on all hands, had given the most extravagant idea of his own importance? I bade defiance to threats —I laughed at, and scorned, reproaches. I ridiculed the soothings and entreaties of my mother; and her gifts, and toys, and favours, furnished in order to tempt me to the habits which she had not the courage to compel, were only received as things of course, which it was her duty to afford me. My father, whose naturally good mind sometimes made him turn an eye of misgiving upon my practices, wanted that stern sense of duty which would probably have brought about a different habit; and when, as was occasionally the case, his words were harsh and his look austere, I went, muttering curses, from his presence, and howling back my defiance to his threats. I was thus brought up without a sense of propriety—without a feeling of fear. I had no respect for authority—no regard for morals. I was a brute from education; and

whether nature did, or did not, contribute to the moral constitution of the creature which I now appear, certain I am, that the course of tutorship which I received from all around me would have made me so. You will argue from this against my notion of the destinies, since I admit, impliedly, that a different course of education would have brought about different results. I think not. The case is still the same. I was fated to be so tutored.

CHAPTER II.

THERE was, at the school to which I went, a boy about twelve years of age—the same age with myself. His name was William Harding; he was the only child of a widow—a lady, living a retired life, of blameless character, and a disposition the most amiable and shrinking. This disposition was inherited by her son in the most extravagant and unhappy degree. He had been the child of affliction. His father had been murdered in a night affray in a neighbouring city, and his body had been brought home to the house and presence of his lady, when she was far advanced in pregnancy. The sudden and terrible character of the shock brought on the pains of labour. Her life was saved with difficulty; and, seemingly, by miraculous interposition, the life of her infant was also preserved. He grew rapidly—tall and promising; but he was the creature of the deepest sensibility. His nervous organization was peculiarly susceptible. He was affected by circumstances the most trifling and casual—trembled and shrank from ev-

ery unwonted breeze—withered beneath reproach, and pined under neglect. A character so marked, presenting too, as it did, so striking a contrast to my own, attracted my attention at an early period of our school association. His dependence, his weakness, his terrors—all made him an object of consideration to my mind which no other character in the school could have provoked. I loved him—strange to say—and with a feeling of singular power. I fought his battles—I never permitted him to be imposed upon: and he—could he do less?—he assisted me in my lessons, he worked out my sums, he reproved my improprieties; and I—brutal and unforbearing with all beside—I bore with and submitted patiently on most occasions to his reproofs. William Harding was a genius, and one of the first order; but his nervous susceptibilities left him perfectly hopeless and helpless. Collision with the world of man would have destroyed him; and, as it was, the excess of the imaginative quality, which seemed to keep even pace with his sensibilities, left him continually struggling—and as continually to the injury and overthrow of the latter—with the calm suggestions of his judgment. He was a creature to be loved and pitied; and without entertaining, at this period, a

single sentiment savouring of either of these kindred emotions for any other existing being, I both loved and pitied him.

One day, to the surprise of all, William Harding appeared in his class, entirely ignorant of his lesson. The master did not punish him with stripes —that was not his usual course—but, as the school was about to be dismissed, commanding the trembling boy before him, he hung about his neck a badge made of a common card, on which was conspicuously printed the word "idler." With this badge he was required to return home, re-appearing at school with it the ensuing afternoon.

A more bitter disgrace could not, by any ingenuity, have been put upon the proud and delicate spirit of this ambitious boy. I never saw dismay more perfectly depicted upon any countenance. His spirit did not permit him to implore. But his eye—it spoke volumes of appeal—it was full of entreaty. The old man knew but little of the ambitious nature—he saw not the appeal—he knew nothing of the entreaty. The school was dismissed, and, in a paroxysm of grief which seemed to prostrate every faculty, my companion threw himself upon the long grass in the neighourhood of the schoolhouse, and refused to be comforted. I

sought him out, and, curious to know the cause of an omission, which, in him, was remarkable, and which should therefore have been overlooked by our tutor, I inquired of him the reason. The cruelty of his punishment was now, upon receiving his answer, more than ever apparent to my eyes. His mother had been ill during the whole of the previous night, and he had been keeping watch and attending upon her. I was indignant, and urged him to throw aside the card beneath the trees, and resume it upon his return to the schoolhouse. But, with a scrupulous conscientiousness, the due result of a circumspect mother's teachings, he refused to descend to the meanness and cowardice of such a procedure, and determined rather to bear his punishment. I was of a different temper. Grown bold and confident by the frequent indulgences which had so often sanctioned my own aberrations, I had already, in many instances before, assumed the burdens of my comrades, escaping myself, while effecting their escape also. Should I now hesitate, when a sense of justice, and a feeling of friendly sympathy coalescing towards the same end, both called upon me for action? I did not. I seized upon the accursed tablet. I tore it from his bosom, and, hacking it to pieces of the smallest

dimensions, I hurled them to the winds, declaring his enfranchisement, at the same moment, with a shout. He would have resisted, and, honestly and earnestly, endeavoured to prevent the commission of the act. But in vain; and, with a feeling of the truest satisfaction, I beheld him return home to his suffering parent. But my turn was to come. I had no fears of the consequences, having been accustomed to violate the rules of school with impunity. In the afternoon, Harding appearing without his badge, was questioned, and firmly refused to answer. But not so me. I had justified my act sufficiently, to myself, at least:—I was not now to forego my triumph; and, boldly advancing from my seat, in the face of the affrighted school, I announced my own handiwork, which, as I was feared by the schoolfellows generally, might never (though several of them had witnessed the whole affair) have been otherwise revealed. At the usual hour of dismissal, I was instructed to remain; and when all had departed, I was taken by the master into a small adjoining apartment, in which he usually studied and kept his books, and which formed the passage-way from the schoolroom to his dwelling-house. Here I was conducted, and, wondering and

curious at these preliminaries, here I awaited his presence. I had been guilty of insubordination and insurrection, and was not altogether sure that he would not proceed to flog me. But not so. He spoke to me like a father—as my father had never spoken to me—his words were those of monitorial kindness and regard. He described the evil consequences to his authority if such conduct were longer tolerated; and contented himself with requiring from me a promise of apology before the assembled school on the following morning. I laughed in his face. He was indignant, as well he might be; and, under the momentary impulse, he gave me a smart blow with the open hand upon my cheek. I was but a boy then—some thirteen or fourteen years of age,—but, at that moment, I measured with my eye the entire man before me, and, though swelling with fury, coolly calculated the chances of success in a physical struggle. Had there been a stick or weapon of any description at hand, I might not have hesitated. As it was, however, prudence came to my counsel. I submitted, though my heart rankled, and my spirit burned within me for revenge; and I had it—years afterward I had it—a deep, a dreadful revenge.

For the time, however, I contented myself with one more congenial with the little spirit of a bad and brutal boy. In schoolboy phrase, he kept me in—he took from me my freedom, locking me up safely in the little study into which I had been conducted.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE in that room, shut up, what were my emotions! The spirit of a demon was working within me, and the passions, acting as they did, with an unwonted degree of violence upon my spirit, nearly exhausted my body. I threw myself upon the floor, and wept—hot, scalding, and bitter tears. But this weakness soon passed into one of a different character: and now I stamped, I raved, I swore. I heard the voice of Harding mournfully addressing me through the partition which separated the schoolroom from my dungeon. He had come to sympathize with, and, if possible, to assist me. But I would not know—I would not hear him. The gloomy fiend was uppermost, and I suddenly became silent. I would not answer his inquiries—I was dumb to all his friendly appeals. In vain did the affectionate boy try every mode of winning me to hear and to reply. I was stubborn, and, at length, as the dusk came on, I could hear his departing footsteps, as he had slowly

and sorrowfully given up his object in despair. He was gone, and I rose from the floor upon which I had thrown myself. The first paroxysms of my anger had departed, and their subdued expression left me an opportunity more deeply to investigate my injuries, and to meditate my revenge. I strode up and down the apartment for some time, when, all of a sudden, I beheld the two large, new, and beautiful globes, which my teacher had but a little while before purchased at a heavy cost, and not without great difficulty, from his little savings. He was a philosopher, and this study was one of his greatest delights—ay, almost his only delight. My revenge stood imbodied before me. I felt that I, too, could now administer pain and punishment—I felt that I, too, had power,—and there is no sweeter consciousness in life. Though small in proportion to what, it appeared to me, my wrongs required, I well knew that to injure his globes would be almost the severest injury I could inflict upon their owner. I did not pause—the demon was impatient. I seized the jug of ink that stood upon the shelf below me, and carefully poured its contents upon the beautifully varnished and coloured outlines of the celestial regions. They were ruined—irreparably ruined; and where

the ink, in its course, had failed to obliterate the figures, I took care that the omission should be amended by employing a feather, still further to complete their destruction. This, you may say, is quite too trifling an incident for record. No such thing. "The child's the parent of the man." In one sense, the life of the child is made up of trifles; but by these trifles, chiefly, the standards of good judgment and just sensibilities are to be created and kept in exercise. The morals are formed most usually by our associates in play; and the tastes and exercises of the juvenile years will, at all times, indicate the character in age, of which they are the very seed and nucleus. The same passions which prompted the act just narrated, would move the grown-up incendiary to the firing of his neighbour's dwelling. The same passions prompted me in after-years to exaggerated offences. How could it be otherwise? They were my education not less than my fate!

Vainly would I endeavour to describe the rage, the agony of wrath, which came over the face of my tutor upon discovering what I had done. It is fresh in my memory, as if the occurrence had taken place but yesterday. I was in the study, where he had left me, upon his return. Indeed, I

could not effect my escape, or I had certainly done so. The room was dark, and, for some time, walking to and fro, and exhorting me, in the most parental manner, as he walked, he failed to perceive his globes, or the injury which they had sustained. In this style he went on, speaking to me in a way which, had not my spirit been acted upon by the arch enemy of man himself, must have had the effect of compelling me to acknowledge and to atone, by the only mode in my power, for my errors and misconduct. I had, indeed, begun to be touched. I felt a disposition to regret my act, and almost inclined to submission and apology. But, on a sudden, he paused—the globes had caught his glance—he approached and inspected them narrowly. Passing his hands over his eyes, he seemed to doubt the correctness of his vision; but when he ascertained, for a truth, the extent of the evil, tears actually started from the decaying orbs, and rolled, as freely as from the eyes of childhood, down his lean and wrinkled face. Then was my triumph. I gloated in his suffering, and, actually, under the most involuntary impulse, I approached, and keenly watched his countenance. He beheld my approach —he saw the demon look of exultation which my features put on; and human passion tri-

umphed. He turned shortly upon me, and, with a severe blow of his fist, he smote me to the ground. I was half stunned, but soon recovered; and with a degree of unconsciousness, perfectly brutish, I rushed upon him. But he was too much for me. He held me firmly with one hand, and in his anger, now more fully provoked by my attack, he inflicted upon me a very severe flogging—almost the only one which I had ever received. It was certainly most richly deserved; but I thought not so then. I looked upon myself as the victim of a most unjustifiable—a most wanton persecution. I did not, for a moment, consider the vast robbery I had made from that poor old man's stock of happiness and enjoyment. My feelings were all concentrated in myself; and my ideas of justice, where my own interests or emotions were concerned, were in no degree abstract. I knew but one being in the world whose claims were to be considered, and that individual was, of course, myself.

I was now dismissed, and, sore and smarting in body and mind, I returned to my home. I showed my bruises—I fabricated a story of greater wrongs and injuries. I dwelt upon the unprovoked aggression; taking care to suppress all particulars

which might have modified the offence of my teacher. The flogging he had given me had been a most severe one—and, the cause not being heard, would seem to have been most brutal. This was another part of my revenge, and it had its consequences. A solemn convocation of the chief men of the village, of whom my father was the dictator, incensed at the indignity, as it met their senses, and relying upon my *ex parte* representation, determined, without further hearing, upon the offence. Michael Andrews lost his school with every circumstance of ignominy; and, in a most pitiable condition of poverty, in a few weeks after, was compelled to leave the place. I was yet unsatisfied—my revenge was not altogether complete—boy as I was—unless I could actually survey it. I went out to see him depart. I watched him, as, in a miserable wagon, containing all his household gear, he drove into the adjacent country, attended by a wife and four young children. Silently, indeed, but not less certainly, did I exult in the prospect, as, from a little hillock which overlooked the road they were compelled to travel, I looked down upon their departure. They beheld me—they could not mistake the expression of my glance,—and the faces of all were immediately turned away.

There is a dignified something in decent sorrow, and suffering borne in silence, which places it above the malice of the petty spirit, however reckless—while it forbids any thing like the spoken taunt or triumph; I had otherwise shouted my cry of victory in their ears. A sad train, they proceeded on their way into the country: a turn in the road in a few moments concealed them from my sight, and satisfied at length with my revenge, I did not care to follow them.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER the direction of a more supple tutor than the first, I finished my education, if so we may call it. William Harding was still my associate. He was still the same nervous, susceptible, gentle youth; and though, as he grew older, the more yielding points of his character became modified in his association with society, he, nevertheless, did not vary in his mental and moral make very considerably from what I have already described him. Though disapproving of many of my habits and propensities, and continually exhorting me upon them, he yet could not but feel the compliment which my spirit, involuntarily, as it were, rendered to his; and he was not at any time averse to the association which I tendered him. Still, he was like me in few respects, if any—no two people could have been more decidedly different; different in attributes of mind—different in purpose and pursuit—different in feelings and sentiments—different in all respects, whether in disposition, in

character, or person. It is the somewhat popular notion that sympathy in pursuit, and opinions and sentiments in common, bring about the connections of friendship and love. I think not—such connections spring from a thousand causes which have no origin in mutual sympathies. The true source of the relationship is the consciousness of dependence and weakness on the one hand—of strength and capacity for protection on the other. This I know to have been the fact in our case; and I believe it to have its share in that of most of those associations which are styled friendly.

With little other society than that of William Harding, years glided away; and, if they brought little improvement to my moral attributes, at least, as they brought with them no new provocations to the old nature, so they left in abeyance, and seemingly quite dormant, many of those, which, in my character, were decidedly immoral. Circumstance is the accoucheur in these cases; and virtue and vice, like cat and dog, would lie quietly together on the same hearth-rug for centuries, without the necessity of blow or broomstick, did not the inconsiderate hand sometimes throw them the bone, and unreasonably look to them justly and peacefully to make the division. My physical man

decidedly improved in the progress of the years. My features underwent a considerable change for the better—my manners were far less objectionable. I had suppressed the more rude and brutal features, and, mingling more with society—that particularly of the other sex—I had seen and obeyed the necessity of a gentlemanly demeanour. . But my heart occupied the same place and character—there was no change in that region. There, all was stubbornness and selfishness—a scorn for the possessions and claims of others—a resolute and persevering impulse which perpetually sought to exercise and to elevate its own. The spell of my fate was upon it—it seemed seared and soured—and while it blighted, and sought to blight the fortunes and the feelings of all others, without any sympathy, it seemed, nevertheless, invariably to partake of the blight. In the vexation of my spirit at this strange inconsistency of allotment, I used to curse myself, that I was not like the serpent—that I could not envenom my enemy, without affecting my own system with the poison meant only for his. To this mood—this fatal mood—the creature of an original nature, made too active by an unhappy education, and most unfortunate indulgence—the want of employment gave activity, if not exercise

and exhibition. The secretions of my malignity, having no object of development, jaundiced my whole moral existence; and a general hostility to human nature and the things of society, at this stage of my being, vented itself in idle curses, and bitter but futile denunciations. I lived only in the night-time. For that matter, my life itself has been a long and weary night, to which, if the starlight ever came, it brought bale only, and bitterness—a night, in which there has been little balm or beauty—a night of many tempests. Talk not of Greenland darkness, or Norwegian ice. The moral darkness is the most solid—and what cold is there like that, where, walled in a black dungeon of hates, and fears, and sleepless hostility, the heart broods in bitterness and solitude over its own cankering, malignant, or misdirected purposes.

I had now grown up to manhood—to unemployed and objectless manhood. While all around were busy, and had duties to perform, the indulgence of my parents, and my own hopes of wealth, seemed to acquit me of any necessity or solicitude as to what labour I should engage in. This was another curse of my education. I was an idler, and learned the lessons of most idlers—those of dissipation—every species of irregularity,

and a horribly consuming ennui. Harding was a student still—a close student—and it was only now and then, in the daytime, that I had his company. My time was in great part passed alone; for, festering in my own rankness of nature, I was too little disposed to seek society. One morning, pursuing a favourite amusement, I had wandered with my gun, for some distance, into a part of the country which was almost entirely unknown to me. The game, though plentiful, was rather shy; and in its pursuit, I was easily seduced to a greater distance from our village, and at length crossed a stream, which, though not a river, was sufficiently large, particularly when swollen by freshets—a not unfrequent event—to make something like a barrier and dividing line between two sections of the country. The day was fine, and without being at all conscious of the extent of my wanderings, I had proceeded some fourteen or fifteen miles. My way led through a close and umbrageous forest. A grove of dwarf or scrub oaks, woven about with thick vines and sheltering foliage, gave a delightful air of quietness to the scene, which could not fail altogether in its effect, even on a spirit so discontented and querulous as mine. Wandering from place to place in the silent and seemingly sacred

haunt of the dreamy nature, I, perceived, for the first time, a clear and beautifully winding creek, that stole in and out, half sheltered by the shrubbery growing thickly about it—now narrowing into a thin stream, and almost lost among the leaves, and now spreading itself out in all the rippling and glassy beauty of a sylvan and secluded lake. I was won by its charms, and pursued it in all its bendings. The whole scene was unique in loveliness. The hum of the unquiet breeze—now resting among, and now flying from, the slowly waving branches above—alone, broke, at intervals, the solemn and mysterious repose of that silence which here seemed to have taken up its exclusive abode. Upon a bank that jutted so far into the lake, by a winding approach, as almost to seem an island, the trees had been taught to form themselves into a bower; while the grass, neatly trimmed within the enclosure, indicated the exercise of that art whose hand has given life to the rock, and beauty to the wilderness. I was naturally attracted by the prospect; and if I were not, a circumstance which occurred at the moment when I stood bewildered with the novelty of the prospect, would have determined me. A sweet but uncultivated voice suddenly broke through the copse, and

the tones of a young girl saluted my ears with a song, in which education seemed somewhat to struggle and vie with simplicity. The words were these—I shall never forget them :—

I.

The bird had playful music,
The heart was full of glee;
And life was rich in pleasantness,
And sunny hours to me.
I knew not what it was to weep,
I never had a care;
And all my days were happy ones,
And all my friends were dear.

II.

Had anybody told me then,
That future hours must come,
When mine would be an aching heart,
For ever clad in gloom—
That I should hear no young bird's voice,
Or, sadden'd by his lay,
Should seek to fly his gentle strain,
Or banish him away :—

III.

I should have deem'd, in thoughtlessness,
That, at my girlish pride,
The prophet speaker took offence,
And only sought to chide—
I should have smiled at prophecy,
So very idle then,
Nor feared, nor felt, as now I do,
I shall not smile again.

The singer paused in the strain—a strain so simple, yet so thoughtful, that I paused also. It had really affected me; and after a few moments' hesitation, which vexed me as I felt it, I approached the spot whence the sounds had arisen, and reaching the point most sheltered, soon found myself in the presence of a tall and beautiful girl, about fifteen years of age, sitting within its shade. Her eyes, cast down upon some needlework which she had in her hands, enabled me to survey, for some time before she became conscious of my notice, the almost singular loveliness of feature and person which she possessed. She started, and trembled with a childish trepidation at my approach, which not a little enhanced the charm of her beauty in my sight. I apologized for my intrusion; made some commonplace inquiry and remark, and we soon grew familiar. The cottage in which her parents resided was but a little way off; and after chatting with her for some time, and in a manner evidently not ungrateful to her, and certainly satisfactory to me, I was permitted to attend her home. What was my surprise, to discover in the person of her father my ancient schoolmaster, old Michael Andrews! Fortunately for me, however, I had been

so completely changed in appearance by the forming hands of time, that he did not recognise me; and even had this not been the case, the condition of the old man himself was such, that I was secure from any fear of detection. His mind and memory were in great part gone. He still contrived, mechanically as it were, to teach the "accidence" to three white-headed urchins, belonging to the neighbourhood; and, in this way, with the industry of his daughters, the family procured a tolerable livelihood. I was treated kindly by the old people, and had certainly made some impression on Emily—the maiden I had accompanied. I lingered for some hours in her company—and, though timid, uneducated, and girlish in a great degree, I was fascinated by her beauty, her gentleness, and the angelic smile upon her lips.

It was late in the day when I left the house of old Andrews. He had heard my name, and showed no emotion. He had evidently forgotten all the circumstances of my boyhood in connection with himself. I could then venture to return—to repeat my visits—to see once more, and when I pleased, the sweet object whose glance had aroused in my bosom an emotion of sense and sentiment entirely

unknown to it before. We did meet, and each returning day found me on the same route. Our intimacy increased, until she became my own—and was my victim.

CHAPTER V.

That girl was the most artless—the most innocent of all God's creatures. Strange! that she should be condemned as a sacrifice to the wishes of the worst and wildest. But, it was her fate, not less than mine! Need I say, that I—whose touch has cursed and contaminated all whose ill fortunes doomed them to any connection with mine—I blighted and blasted that innocence, and changed the smile into the tear, and the hope into the sorrow, of that fond and foolishly confiding creature. We were both, comparatively, children. She was, indeed, in all respects a child—but I—I had lived years—many years of concentrated wickedness and crime. To do wrong was to be myself—it was natural. That I should deceive and dishonour, is not, therefore, matter of surprise; but that there should be no guardian angel—no protecting shield for the unwary and the innocent, would seem to manifest an unwise improvidence in the dispenser of things. A few months of our

intimacy only had elapsed. In the quiet and secluded bower where we had first met, she lay in my arms. I had wrought upon her imagination to the utmost. With a stern sense and consciousness, all the while, of what I was doing, I had industriously aroused all the natural passions of her bosom. Her lips were breathing and burning beneath my own. Her bosom was beating violently against mine. My arm encircled and clasped her closely. There was a warm languor in the atmosphere—the trees murmured not—the winds were at repose—no warning voice rose in the woods—no tempest blackened in the sky; the shrill scream of a solitary bird at that moment might have broken the spell—might have saved the victim. But the scream came not—the fates had decreed it—body and soul, the victim was mine. She was no longer the pure, the glad, the innocent and unstained angel I had first known her. Her eyes were now downcast and fearful—her frame trembled with all the consciousness of guilt. She gave up all to her affection for one so worthless—so undeserving as myself: yet, even then, she had won none of my affections, though loving me, even as the young and morning flower may be seen to link

and entwine itself with, and about, the deadly and venomous nightshade. Mine were the professions of the momentary passion, which I had taught her to believe, and which, for the time, I had actually believed myself. But only for a time.

Our intercourse was continued in this way for several months. The consequences now began to threaten Emily with exposure, and she hourly besought me to provide against them by our marriage, as I had already frequently promised her to do. But I had no idea of making any such sacrifice. The passion which had prompted me at first, had no longer a place in my bosom. I did not any longer continue to deceive myself with the belief that she either was, or could be, any thing to me. She had few attractions now in my sight, and though still beautiful—more touchingly so, indeed, from a sadness which her features had been taught to wear, and which had now become habitual—I had learned to be disgusted and to sicken at the frequency of her complaints, and the urgency and extravagance, as I then considered them, of her requisitions. Still, I could not desert her entirely. I had not yet grown callous enough for that. I saw her frequently, and in various ways sought,

not merely to evade her entreaties, but to sooth and alleviate her distresses.

To full manhood I had now attained, and it was advised by my father, that, as I had nothing else to do, I should employ myself in addressing a lady whom he had already chosen, as worthy to be the consort of so hopeful a son. Constance Claiborne was not merely young, beautiful, and wealthy—she was amiable and accomplished. Our parents arranged the matter between them, before either of the parties most interested knew or suspected any thing of what was going on. I had as yet heard nothing of the affair. But that was no objection. It proved none with me. I was not unwilling, for many reasons, that the marriage should take place. It will be sufficient to name one of these reasons. Though liberal, the allowance of money for my own expenditure, which I received from my father, had, for a long time past, been inadequate to the wants which my excesses necessarily occasioned. I had got largely into debt. I was harassed by creditors; and had been compelled to resort to various improper expedients to meet my exigences. My more recent habits rendered a still further increase of stipend essential; for though, for some months, I had given

my time chiefly to Emily, I had not yet so entirely divested myself of my old associates as to do with less money. My pride, too, would not permit her to want for many things, and I had contributed, not a little, towards the improvement of the condition of her family. It is well, perhaps, that, in a chronicle of crimes, almost unvarying, I should not altogether overlook those instances of conduct, which, if not praiseworthy, were, at least, not criminal. The marriage was, therefore, determined upon. Constance was an obedient child, and, without any affection existing—without knowing, indeed, what her affections should be—she consented to become my wife. Still, though making up my determination, without scruple, on the subject, I confess I was not altogether at ease when my thoughts reverted to the condition of the poor girl I had dishonoured. But what was that condition? In pecuniary matters, I could make her better off than ever—and, so far as caste was concerned, she could suffer no loss, for she had known no society. I never thought of the intrinsic value and necessity of virtue. My considerations were all selfish, and tributary to conventional estimates. I saw no difficulty in marrying the heiress, and still enjoying, as before, the society of Emily. Matrimonial

fidelity was still less a subject of concern; and, adjusting, in this way, the business and relations of the future, I hurried the arrangements, and prepared assiduously for the enjoyments of the bridal.

CHAPTER VI.

A SENSE of caution—or it may be of shame—determined me to keep the proposed marriage, as long as I well could, from the knowledge of the one being whom it most injured. A few days before that which had been assigned for the event, I proceeded to the place of our usual rendezvous. I had not seen her for several days before; and her looks indicated sickness and suspicion. The latter appearance I did not seem to observe, but her indisposition called forth my inquiries and regrets. I still strove to put on the guise of affection, but my words were cold, and my manner, I feel assured, wore all the expression of the most confirmed indifference.

"You look unwell, Emily," I observed, putting my arms around her—"you have not been so, have you?"

"Can you ask?" was her reply, as her eyes were mournfully riveted upon my own; "could I continue well, and not see you for three days?

Alas! Martin, you little know how long a period in time is three whole days to me in your absence. Where have you been? have you been sick? you look not as you are wont to look. You are troubled, and something afflicts you."

Her manner was tender in the extreme—the suggestion, even by herself, of indisposition as the cause of my absence, seemed to awaken all her solicitude, and to make her regret her own implied reproaches.

"I have been slightly unwell, Emily," was my reply, in a tone gravely adapted to indicate something of continued indisposition; and the possibility that this was the case brought out all her fondness. How like a child—a sweet confiding child, she then spoke to me. With what deep and fervent devotion!—and yet, at the very moment when the accents of her voice were most touching and tender, I had begun to hate her. She was in my way—I saw how utterly impossible it was, that, feeling for me as she did, she could ever tolerate a connection with me, shared at the same time with another.

"But—there is one thing, Martin—one thing of which I would speak—and, hear me patiently, and be not angry, if, in what I say, I may do you

injustice, and may not have heard rightly. Say, now, that you will not be angry with your Emily —that you will forgive her speech if it seem to call in question your integrity; for, as I live, Martin, I think you intend me no wrong."

And as she spoke, her hand grasped my arm convulsively, while one of her own, as if with a spasmodic effort, wound itself about my neck. I saw that the time for stern collision was at hand—that busy tongues had been about her—and I steeled myself stubbornly for the struggle and the strife.

"And what do they say, Emily? and who are they that say any thing which calls for such a note of preparation? Speak out—say on!"

"I will, Martin—but look not so upon me. I cannot bear your frown—any thing but that."

"Now, then—what is said? What would you have, Emily?"

"There have been those to my mother, Martin, who have doubted your love for me; and, ignorant of how much importance it is to me now, who say, you are only seeking to beguile and to mislead me."

"They do me wrong, Emily—they speak falsely, believe me, as I live."

"I knew it, Martin—I knew that they did you

wrong, and I told them so; but they sneered and laughed, and so they left me. But, Martin—they will speak to others, when I shall not be there to defend you, and we shall both suffer under their suspicions."

She paused here, and her eye sunk under the penetrating gaze of mine; but suddenly recovering, and hurrying herself, as if she feared the loss of that momentary impulse which then came to sustain her, she proceeded—

"I knew that I should suffer from you no injustice—I could not think it possible that you could wrong the poor girl, who had confided to you so far;—but, Martin—do not smile at my folly—a something whispers me I have not long, not very long, to live; and I would be your wife—your married wife—before the time comes when my sin shall stand imbodied before me. Let me have the *peace*—the *peace*, Martin—which our lawful union will bring with it; for now I have none. You have promised me frequently—say now that we shall be married this week—say on Thursday, Martin—on Thursday next, that it shall take place."

I started when she concluded the sentence, as if I had been stung by an adder. Thursday was the day appointed for my marriage with Constance.

Had she heard of this? I fixed my eyes attentively and searchingly upon her own; but, though filled with tears, they quailed not beneath my glance. On the contrary, her gaze was full of intenseness and expression. They conveyed, in that dumb, but most expressive language, which is theirs only, the touching appeal of her subdued and apprehensive, though seemingly confident and assured, spirit. Disappointment, and the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, had worn her into meagerness. Her cheeks were pale—her look was that of suppressed wretchedness; but these things touched me not. I had no notion of compliance, and my only thought was how to break off a connection that promised to be so excessively troublesome. I had now become completely tired of her, and told her peremptorily that it was impossible, for a variety of reasons, to grant her request. She implored—she made a thousand appeals to every supposed impulse and emotion of manhood and affection; to my pride, to my honour, to my love. I was inflexible; and finally, when she continued to press the matter with a warmth and earnestness natural to one in her situation, particularly as I had given her no reason for my refusal, I grew brutally stern in my replies. I repulsed her

tenderness, and peevishly, at length, uttered some threat—I know not what—something of absence, or indifference, or anger.

She retreated from me a pace, and drawing her hands over her eyes, seemed desirous of shutting out the presence of a character so entirely new and unexpected, as I now appeared to her. For a moment she preserved this attitude in silence—then, suddenly again approaching, in subdued accents, she spoke as at first.

"Your words and look, Martin, just now, were so strange and unnatural that I was almost afraid of you. Do not speak so again to your Emily, but oh, grant her prayer—her last prayer. I do not pray for myself, for though I could not live without your affections, I shall not need them long; but I pray you to give a name, an honourable name, to the little innocent of this most precious burden. Let it not, if it lives, curse the mother for the boon of a life which its fellows must despise, and speak of with scorn and ignominy."

I withstood even this appeal. My heart was steeled within me; and, though I spoke to her less harshly, I spoke as hypocritically as ever. She saw through the thin veil which I had deemed it necessary to throw over my dishonesty, and a new

expression took the place of tenderness in her features.

"It is all true, then, as they have said," she exclaimed, passionately. "Now, O God! do I feel my infirmity—now do I know my sin! And this is the creature I have loved! this is the thing—wanting in the heart to feel, and mean enough in soul to utter falsehood and prevaricate! this is the creature for whom I have sacrificed my heart—for whom I have given up, hopelessly and haplessly, my own soul. Oh! wretched fool! oh, miserable, most miserable folly! Yet think not," and as she turned upon me she looked like the priestess upon the tripod, maddened with the sacred inspiration; "think not, mean traitor as thou art—think not to triumph in thy further seduction. Me thou hast destroyed—I am thy victim, and I feel the doom already. But thou shalt go no farther in thy way. I will seek out this lady, for whose more attractive person, mine, and my honour and affections, alike, are to be sacrificed. She shall hear from me all the truth. She shall know whether it be compatible with her honour and happiness, or the dignity of her character, to unite herself in such bonds with a man who has proved so deadly, so dishonourable to her sex. And, O God!" she ex-

claimed, sinking fervently on her knee—"if it shall so happen that I save one such as I from such a folly as mine, may it not expiate in thy sight some portion of the sad offence of which I have been guilty ?"

She arose firmly and without a tear. Her eyes were red, her cheeks were burning with the fever of her whole frame, and she seemed, in all respects, the imbodiment of a divine, a glorious inspiration. I was awed—I was alarmed. I had never before seen her exhibit any thing like daring or firmness of purpose. She was now the striking personification of both. She approached, and sought to pass by me. I seized her hand. She withdrew it quickly and indignantly.

"Begone!" she exclaimed—"I scorn, I despise you. Think not to keep me back. You have brought death and shame among my people in devoting me to both. You shall pollute me no more. Nay, speak not. No more falsehood, no more falsehood, for your own soul's sake. I would not that you should seem meaner in my sight than you now really appear."

I seized her hand, and retained it by a fierce grasp.

"Emily!" I exclaimed, "what would you do—

why is this? I ask but for delay; give me but a month, and all will be well: you shall then have what you ask—you shall then be satisfied."

"False—false! These assurances, sir, deceive me not now—they deceive me no longer. My hope is gone, for ever gone, that you will do me justice. I see through your hypocrisy—I know all your villany, and Constance Claiborne shall know it too. Ha! do you start when her name is but mentioned? Think you, I know it not all—know I not that you have been bought by money?—that, vile and mercenary as you are, you have not only sold me, and this unborn pledge of your dishonesty and my dishonour, but you have sold yourself? Seek not to keep me back. She shall hear it all from these lips, that, thenceafter, shall for evermore be silent."

She struggled to free herself from my grasp, and endeavoured to pass by me, with a desperate effort—her strength was opposed to mine, and, in the heat of the struggle, I forgot that victory in such a contest would be the heaviest shame. Yet, I only sought, at first, to arrest her progress. As I live, I had then no other object beyond. I certainly did not intend violence, far less further crime. But the fate was upon me; she persisted in her de-

sign, and, in the effort to prevent her passage, I hurled her to the ground. I paused in a deadly stupor after this. I was no longer a reasoning—a conscious being. She looked up to me imploringly—the desperate feeling which heretofore had nerved and strengthened her seemed utterly to have departed. The tears were in her eyes, and, at that moment, she would have obeyed as I commanded—she would have yielded to all my requisitions—she would have been my slave. She met no answering gentleness in my eyes; and, with a choking and vain effort at speech, she turned her face despairingly upon the still dewy grass, and sobbed, as if the strings of her heart were breaking in unison with each convulsion of her breast. At that moment, I know not what demon possessed me. There was a dead—a more than customary silence, in all things around me. I felt a fury within me—a clamorous anxiety about my heart—a gnawing something that would not sleep, and could not be quieted; and, without a thought of what I was to do, or what had been done, I knelt down beside her. My eyes wandered wildly around the forest, but invariably came back, and settled, in the end, upon her. There was an instinct in all this. She had the look of an enemy to the secret

and impelling nature within me; and, without uttering a single word, my fingers, with an infernal gripe, were fastened upon her throat. She could not now doubt the desperate character of my design; yet did she not struggle—but her eyes, they spoke—and such a language! A chain which I myself had thrown about her neck—that neck, all symmetry and whiteness—fell in my way. I sought, but vainly, to tear it apart with my hands, and could only do so—with my teeth. In stooping for this, she writhed her head about, and lifted her lips to mine. I shrunk back, as from the fang of a serpent. They had a worse sting, at that moment, in my eyes. Mournfully, as she saw this, she implored my mercy.

"Spare me, forgive me, dearest Martin!—I will never vex you again—spare me this time, and I will be silent! Kill me not—kill me not"—more wildly she exclaimed, as my grasp became more painful —"I am too young to die—I am too bad to perish in my sins. Spare me—spare me! I will not accuse you—I—God! Oh—God!"—and she was dead—dead beneath my hands!

CHAPTER VII.

I BREATHED not—I lived not, for a minute. My senses were gone—my eyes were in the air, in the water, in the woods; but I dared not turn them, even for an instant, to the still imploring glance of that now fixed and terrifying look of appeal. Still it pursued me, and I was forced to see—it was impossible that I could turn from the horrible expression—the dreadful glare, which shot from them through every muscle of my frame. The trees were hung with eyes that depended from them like leaves. Eyes looked at me from the water that gushed by us; and, as in a night of many stars, the heavens seemed clustering with gazing thousands, all bent down terrifically upon me. I started to my feet in desperation; and by a stern impulse I could not withstand, I pronounced audibly the name of my crime.

"Murder!"

Ten thousand echoes gave me back the sound. Tongues spoke it from every tree; and, roused into

something like demoniac defiance, I again shouted it back to them with the energies of a Stentor—then leaned eagerly forward to hear the replication which they made. But this mood lasted not long. I was a murderer! I whispered it, as if in terror, to myself. I seemed to doubt, and to desire some assurance of the truth.

"Am I not a murderer?" was my inquiry.

Spoken, however low, it still had its echo.

"Murderer!" was the response of the trees, which had now tongues, as well as eyes. The agony grew intolerable, and a lethargic stupor came to my aid. I approached the corpse of my victim. Resolutely I approached it. How different was the aspect which her features now wore. She looked forth all her sweetness, and there was something—so I fancied—like forgiveness on her lips. Was it I that had defiled so pure an image? was it my hand, that, penetrating the sanctuary of life, had stolen the sacred fire from the altar? Oh, strange that man should destroy the beauty which charms—the life that cheers and gladdens—the affection which has won and nourished him!

Deep in the centre of that forest stood an ancient rock. It was little known to the neighbourhood, and its discouraging aspect, and rude and difficult

access, had preserved it from frequent intrusion. I, however, whom no sterility could at any time deter, had explored its recesses, and it now suggested itself to my mind as the place most calculated to keep the secret of my crime. A large, natural cavity in one of its sides, difficult of approach, and inscrutable to research, seemed to present the idea of a natural tomb, and the suggestion was immediately acted upon. I took her body in my arms—I pressed her to my heart—but in that pressure I maddened. I had not yet destroyed, in her death, the distinct principle of life which she carried within her. I felt the slight but certain motion of her child—of my child—struggling as it were for freedom. I closed my eyes—I suppressed the horrible thoughts which were crowding upon my brain, and, hurrying on my way, sought out the cavity assigned for her repose. But a single plunge, and she was gone from sight, from reach—she and her child—I was a double murderer. The rock was silent as the grave—it had no echoes—for, at that place and moment, I had no speech.

Will it be believed, the huge stride which I had taken in crime contributed largely to the sense of my own importance. Such is our nature. We are proud of the power to destroy. I had never before

doubted my capacity for evil—but I now felt—for I had now realized—I had exercised—this capacity. There is something elevating—something attractive to the human brute, even in being a destroyer. It was so with me. There was an increased vigour in my frame—there was new strength and elasticity in my tread—I feel assured that there was a loftier, a manlier expression in my look and manner. But all was not so in my thought. There, every thing was in an uproar. There was a strange incoherence, an insane recklessness about my heart; where, if I may so phrase it, the spirit seemed prone to wandering about precipices and places of dread and danger. I kept continually repeating to myself the name of my crime. I caught myself muttering, over and over, the word "Murderer," and that, too, coupled with my own name. "Murderer" and "Martin Faber" seemed ever to my imagination the burden of a melody; and its music, laden with never ceasing echoes, heard by my own ears, was for ever finding its way to my own lips.

CHAPTER VIII.

I LEFT the rock, slowly and frequently looking behind me. Sometimes my fancies confirmed to my sight the phantom of the murdered girl, issuing from the gaping aperture, and with waving arms threatening and denouncing me. But I sternly put down these weak intruders. Though this was the first crime of so deep a die which I had ever committed, I felt that the thoughts and feelings which came with this act had been long since familiar to my mind. The professional assassin could hardly look upon his last murder with more composure than I now surveyed the circumstances of my first. I was indeed a veteran, and in a past condition of society I should have been a hero—the saviour or the destroyer of a nation.

To be precipitate, was to be weak; so I thought, even in that moment of fearful circumstances. I went back with all possible composure to the spot on which the crime had been committed. I examined the place carefully—took, with my eye, the

bearing and distances of all the surrounding objects in their connection with the immediate spot on which the deed had been done. In this examination, I found the pocket-handkerchief of Emily, with her name written in India ink upon it. I carefully cut it into shreds, dividing each particular letter with my penknife, and distributing the several pieces at slow intervals upon the winds. Where our feet together had pressed the sands, with a handful of brush I obliterated the traces; and, in the performance of this task, I drew off my own shoes, leaving only, as I proceeded, the impression of a naked foot. While thus engaged, I perceived, for the first time, that I had lost a rich and large cameo from my bosom. The loss gave me no little concern; for, apart from the fact of its being generally known for mine, the initials of my name were engraved upon the gold setting. How, and where had it been lost? This was all-important, and with indefatigable industry I examined the grass and every spot of ground which I had gone over in the recent events. But in vain—it was not to be found; and with a feeling of uneasiness—not to describe my anxiety by a stronger epithet—I proceeded on my way home.

The poverty of Emily's family; the insulated

position which they held in society; their inability to press an inquiry—were all so many safeguards and securities in my favour. There was some little stir, it is true—but I had so arranged matters that I passed unsuspected. The inquiry was confined to the particular part of the country in which she resided—a lonely and almost uninhabited region—and but a distant rumour of her unaccountable disappearance reached our village; and there the connection existing between us was almost entirely unknown. The family had but few claims upon society, and but little interest was excited by their loss. In a little while, all inquiry ceased; and, with a random and general conclusion that she had fallen into the river, the thought of Emily Andrews gradually passed away from the memories of those who had once known her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE night came, appointed for my marriage with the beautiful and wealthy Constance Claiborne. Attended by William Harding, who, strange to say, in spite of the manifest and radical differences of character existing between us, was yet my principal companion, I was punctual to the hour of appointment. Every preparation had been made by which the ceremony should be attractive. A large company had been assembled. Lights in profusion—rich dresses—gayly crowded and decorated apartments, and the most various music, indicated the spirit of joy and perfect harmony with which our mutual families contemplated the union. I have already said the bride was beautiful. Words cannot convey an idea of her beauty. She was emphatically a thing of light and love—

"Which seen, becomes a part of sight."

In grace, one knew not with what, save herself, to institute a comparison. In expression, there were

volumes of romantic and interesting poetry imbodied in each feature of her face; and the steel of my affections, stern as it was, wherever she turned, even as the dutiful needle to the pole, turned intuitively along with her. Such was the maiden—so much after the make and mould of heaven, whom a cruel destiny was about to link with one formed in spirit after the fashion of hell.

The ceremony was begun. We stood up with linked hands at the altar. The priest went on with his formula. The bride's hand trembled in mine, and her eyes were commercing only with the richly carpeted floor. I was about to answer the question which should have made us one, when a cold wind seemed to penetrate my body. My bones were numbed, and a freezing chill went through my whole system. My tongue refused its office, and, instinctively as it were, bending to the opposite quarter of the apartment, my eyes fell upon a guest whom none had invited. There, palpable as when I had last seen her, stood the form of Emily Andrews—a pale and melancholy spectre, and full of a terrible reproach. I was dumb, and for a moment had eyes only for her. She was motionless, as when I had borne her to the unhallowed grave in which she did not rest. My dis-

quiet, so unaccountable to all around, seemed to indicate a reluctance to the ceremony. I felt that all eyes were upon me—the bride's hand was slowly withdrawn from mine, and that motion restored me. Mine were terrible energies. I seized her hand with a strong effort, and with a voice of the sternest emphasis, my eye still firmly fixed upon the obtrusive phantom, I gave the required affirmative. With the word, the figure was gone. I had conquered. You will tell me, as philosophers have long since told us, that this was all the work of my imagination—a diseased and excited fancy; and in this you are probably right. But what of that? Is it less a matter of supernatural contrivance, that one's own spirit should be made to conjure up the spectres which haunt and harrow it, than that the dead should actually be made to imbody themselves, as in life, for the same providence? The warning sound that chatters in my ear of approaching death, may be, in fact, entirely unuttered; but if my senses, by an overruling fate, are calculated for the inception of such a sound, and compelled to recognise its presence, shall we hold it as less the work of a superior agency? Is it less an omen for that?

This was not all. At midnight, as I approached

my chamber, the same ghastly spectre stood at the door, as if to guard it against my entrance. For a moment I paused and faltered; but thought came to my relief. I knew that the energies of the soul, immortal and from the Highest as they are, were paramount; and I advanced without fear. I stretched forth my hand to the key—in the face and in defiance of the spectre—and all was vacancy again before me. If my fancies had conceived the ghost, my own energies were adequate to its control. In this I had achieved a new conquest, and my pride was proportionately increased and strengthened. I was thus taught how much was in my own power, in controlling my own moods, compelling obedience from my own fears and fancies—in making even destiny subservient to my will!

CHAPTER X.

To the reflective mind, I need not say that no happiness awaited me on my marriage. Still less necessary to say that the amount of happiness which fell to the lot of my wife was equally, if not more limited. A temper like mine—so impatient, and so without resources—could not long suffer a dependant or an associate to remain at peace. She felt accordingly; and I am persuaded a greater curse could not well have fallen to her lot. I did not ill-treat her—to speak in common phrase—I employed no blows—no violence. But there are other penalties which virtue can be made to endure, not less frequently, and far more poignantly, than vice. I was a wretched, sleepless, discontent—always showing my teeth, and, when occasion offered, never withholding my venom. She suffered as a martyr—with a patience that was never to be disturbed; and I failed utterly, however much I strove, to drive her beyond the boundary of a yielding, an always conciliating humility.

She loved me not, from the first—how could she love me?—and only became my bride, from the absence of a sufficient degree of firmness in her character to resist the commands or the solicitations of her parents. Perhaps, too, as she knew little of me, and less still, at that time, of the nature of those feelings of which her heart could become susceptible, the constraint had been less upon her than, even then, I imagined it to have been. That she soon perceived her error and misfortune, I discovered not less quickly; and in due accordance with the discovery, my pride grew morbid and angry. I did not distrust—but I hated her; and with a fiend-like hatred, which can only be understood by a reference to the course of conduct which I thought proper to pursue in consequence. With a perversity of character, strange and contradictory —which let philosophers account for as they may —when I found that she could love—that feelings were engendered in her bosom for another, hostile to her affection for me, though not at variance with her duty—I encouraged their growth—I nursed their development—I stimulated their exercise; and strove—would you believe it?—to make her the instrument of my own dishonour. But her sense of pride and propriety was greater than mine.

Though soon conscious that her heart was another's, she unerringly held her faith to her husband; and my anger and dislike were exaggerated, when I discovered that my vice, even when allied to, and assisted by, her own legitimate feelings, could acquire no ascendency over her virtue.

I soon found that she had been won, all unconsciously on his part, by the talents, the gentleness, and many attractions of mind and manner of my old associate and schoolfellow, William Harding. She listened to his language with unreluctant spirit, and a pleasure which she never thought to conceal. She was only happy in his presence and society; and with a feeling which she had never yet dared to name to herself, and from the analysis of which I feel she must always have shrunk, she gave him a preference over all others, in every thought, in every emotion of her being. Nor was he insensible to her regards. Sensitive, and easily wrought upon, whether by kindness or cruelty, her ceaseless consideration, exhibited in a thousand forms, of which she herself knew nothing, controlled him like an infant. He had always been very intimate with me—more so than any other of the village—and he was now almost an inmate of my house. With the free openness of heart which marked and

made his character, he sought unreservedly for the society of Constance, and Constance only: and while I saw from this, that his intentions had no dishonourable object, I saw at the same time that he knew nothing of the precise feeling which prompted them. I had learned, with singular felicity, at an early period of my life, to study and to analyze the human heart. I exercised my habit with regard to these two, and was not long in discovering that their propensities were mutual. At first, while she was yet a charming creation in my sight, and before I had learned to disregard and be indifferent to the admiration which she excited in others, this predilection gave me not a little concern. I was for a season the victim of a jealous doubt—not so much the result of a fear, or of offended honour, as of a weak pride and vanity, that was vexed at the preference given to another in the bosom of one I would, at that time, have had exclusively my own. But this feeling went with the season. I grew indifferent at first to, then pleased with, their association; and finally, it became an object with me so to encourage it, as, in time, to afford me sufficient opportunity and excuse for a dreadful and overwhelming revenge. To this object I addressed all the means in my power, but without the desired

success. They were both honest—sweetly, nobly honest; as, from my own feeling and character, I had never expected man or woman to have been. Joining in thought—intermingling hourly in spirit, and in a communion which, if they had not been wonderfully immaculate, must have brought out their weaknesses, they were yet strong; and the most jealous scrutiny, the most bitter hate and hostility, could never have construed into impropriety a solitary feature in their conduct. Many were the modes which I adopted to stimulate their passions—to influence or to create desires—to put their passions into that fervour, which, once provoking discontent and the vague want which is the first symptom of the active appetite, will never rest again short of its surfeit. Thousands of opportunities did I throw before them in order to provide myself with victims. But they were children—weak enough for susceptibility, but not daring to do wrong. They went through every ordeal like angels—without a speck of earth; and, pining with strong affections, and suffering as they did in the noble struggle to restrain and keep them down, I was yet mortified to see that they could not be otherwise than successful. But the strife of their spirits in this labour had its influence, and, day by day,

the cheek of Constance grew paler and paler, and there was a nameless anguish in her eye, as it sunk beneath my own, which spoke of that love—worst love of all—which has its birth untwinned by hope. Nor was she the only one with whose heart the contest promised to be vital. I beheld, at every succeeding visit, the increasing fever in the soul of my other victim. The worm was in the core, and kept up a ceaseless labour in the bosom of the gentle and too susceptible Harding.

CHAPTER XI.

SEVERAL months had now elapsed since our marriage, and in that time, as might have been expected, my young wife and domestic associations had lost most of their attractions—in my eyes at least. My resources were now always out of doors—carousing sometimes, but frequently solitary and savage. My favourite pursuit—one that had been a passion in boyhood, and which contributed not a little to the sternness of my mood—was to take long walks into the neighbouring country, with my fowling-piece on my shoulder, and, with this apology for my wanderings, I had contrived to become familiar with the forests in that neighbourhood for fifteen miles round. It was in a ramble of this sort that I had first encountered Emily, and this habit furnished a sufficient reason to others, for those long absentings from home in which my time had been chiefly given up to her. Sometimes, on these excursions, Harding would become my companion; not that he was a sportsman, but simply because of his contemplative character of mind, which luxuriated, and was enthusiastic, in its admiration of the gloomy beauty of the thick woods. His

presence did not interfere with my mood; indeed, although the cause was essentially different, his silence was a fitting similitude of mine. We wandered thus from one wood to another, through path and cover, frequently without a word, and living only in our thoughts. It was on one of these occasions, while traversing a dense thicket, girded in by heavy trees, and almost impervious from the undergrowth, that we sat down together upon the trunk of a fallen pine, and fell into conversation. The sun was completely shut out from the spot, and the solemn hush of all things about us was such as to make the train of thought in our minds much gloomier than ever. Our dialogue was necessarily prompted by the circumstances of our situation; and, as if impelled throughout the whole scene by an irresistible monitor, I remarked to him thus, in spite of my own consciousness of the danger of such a topic—

"Harding, this is just the spot, it appears to me, that one would choose in which to commit a murder!"

"Horrible!" was his reply; "what could put such a thought into your head? This is just the spot, now, which I should select for the inception of a divine poem. The awful stillness—the solemn gloom—the singular and sweet monotony of

sound coming from the breeze through the bending tree-tops, all seem well calculated to beget fine thoughts—daring fancies—bold and striking emotions."

"You talk of taking life as if it were the crowning crime. It appears to me an error of society, by which the existence of a being, limited to a duration of years, is invested with so much importance. A few years lopped from the life of an individual is certainly no such loss, shortening, as it must, so many of his cares and troubles; and the true standard by which we should determine upon a deed, is the amount of good or evil which it may confer upon the person or persons immediately interested."

"That is not the standard," was his reply, "since that would be making a reference to varying and improper tribunals to determine upon principles which should be even and immutable. To some men, from the operation of circumstances, or from their own improvidence, death would be welcome even by violence; and the feeling with which such a man would submit to the executioner, can surely afford no standard by which to determine upon the fate of others not so situated, and not having the same feeling or condition with himself. Life is a sacred something which we do not venerate enough.

It is considered quite too lightly by society, and it appears to me, if we believe for a moment in the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of rewards and punishments, we have not the right, even in the case of the criminal, to doom him to a loss of it. The idea is horrible which conceives the murder of a human being, even according to the standard you suggest; for, leave the choice but a moment to the victim, and he will submit, in most cases, to the loss of all his possessions, and even of his liberty, to avoid that fearful rush of the soul into the dark and deep chaos which our ignorance depicts the future."

"Why, what would you say to a friend, William —to me, for example, if I told you I had been guilty of this crime?"

"Say!" he exclaimed, as his eyes shot forth an expression of the deepest horror—"Say! God help me, I could say nothing—I could never look on you again."

I surveyed him with close attention for a few moments, then, with a deliberation that, under all the circumstances, was significant of a momentary madness, placing my hands upon his shoulders, I slowly exclaimed—

"Look! you shall look upon me again—you shall see and hear. I have been guilty of this same

crime of taking life. I have been, and am, a murderer."

He sprang upon his feet with undisguised horror. His face was pale as death—his lips were parted in affright; and, while I held one of his hands, the other, involuntarily, was passed over, entirely concealing, his eyes. What prompted me to the narration I know not. I could not resist the impulse—I was compelled to speak. It was my fate. I described my crime—I dwelt upon all its particulars; but, with a caution strangely inconsistent with the open confidence I had manifested, I changed the name of the victim; I varied the period, and falsified, in my narrative, all the localities of the crime; concluding with describing her place of burial beneath a tree in a certain ground which was immediately contiguous, and well known to us both.

He heard me out with wonder and astonishment. His terror shook his frame as with an ague, and at the conclusion he tried to laugh, and his teeth chattered in the effort.

"It is but a story," he said, chokingly, "a horrible story, Martin, and why do you tell it me? I almost thought it true, from the earnest manner in which you narrated it"

"It is true, William—true as you now stand before me. You doubt, I will swear—"

"Oh, swear not; I would rather not believe you; say no more; I pray you, tell me no more."

With a studied desperation—a malignant pleasure, increasing in due proportion with the degree of mental torture which he appeared to undergo, I went again over the whole story as I had before told it, taking care that my description of each particular should be made as vivid as the solemn and bold truth certainly made it.

"I am a murderer, William Harding!"

"May God forgive you, Martin; but why have you told me this—would you murder me, Martin? Have I done any thing to offend you?"

His excessive nervousness, at length, grew painful, even to myself. "Nay, fear not, I would not harm you, William, for the world. I would rather serve and save you. But keep my secret. I have told it you in confidence, and you will not betray me."

"Horrible confidence!" was his only reply, as we took our way out from the forest.

CHAPTER XII.

SEVERAL days had passed since this conference, and, contrary to his custom, Harding, in all this time, had kept out of my sight. His absence was felt by both Constance and myself. He had been, of late, almost the only companion known to either of us. Why I liked him, I knew not. His virtues were many, and virtues were, at no time, a subject of my admiration. That he was loved by Constance I had no question; that he loved her, I felt equally certain—but it was the passion of an angel on the part of both; and it may be that, knowing the torture which it brought with it to both of them, my malignant spirit found pleasure in bringing them together. It was not a charitable mood, I am satisfied, that made me solicitous that he should be as much as possible an inmate of my dwelling.

He came at last, and I was struck with his appearance. The change for the worse was dreadfully obvious. He looked like one who had been for many nights without sleep; he was pale, nervous to the last degree, and awfully haggard.

"I am miserable," said he, "since you breathed

that accursed story in my ears. Tell me, I conjure you, Martin, as you value my quiet, that you but jested with me—that the whole affair was but a fabrication—a fetch of the nightmare—a mere vision of the fancy."

Will it be believed, that, having thus an opportunity, even then, of undoing the impression I had created, I took no advantage of it? I persisted in the story—I was impelled to do so, and could not forbear. There was an impulse that mastered the will—that defied the cooler judgment—that led me waywardly as it thought proper. You have read that strange poem of Coleridge, in which the "Auncient Marinere" is made, whether he will or no, and in spite of every obstacle, to thrust his terrible narrative into the ears of the unwilling listener. It was so with me. But though I was thus compelled to denounce my crime, the will had still some exercise, and I made use of it for my security. I changed the particulars so materially from the facts as they really were, that inquiry must only have resulted in my acquittal. The state of mind under which Harding laboured was of melancholy consequence to him, at least, if not to me. Sad and disappointed, he left me without a word, and for some days more I saw him not. At length he came to me, looking worse than ever.

"I shall go mad, Faber, with this infernal secret. It keeps me awake all night. It fills my chamber with spectres. I am haunted with the presence of the girl you accuse yourself of having murdered."

"Go to—will you be a child all your life? Why should she haunt you? It is not you who have murdered her—she does not trouble me."

"Nevertheless, she does haunt me. She calls upon me to bring you to justice. I awake, and she is muttering in my ears. She implores—she threatens—she stands by my bedside in the darkness—she shakes the curtains—I hear the rustling of her garments—I hear her words; and, when I seek to sleep, her cries of 'Murder! Murder! Murder!' are shouted, and ring through all my senses, as the sound of a sullen, swinging bell in the wilderness. Save me, Martin, from this vision; save me from the consequence of your own imprudence in telling me this story. Assure me that it is untrue, or I feel that I shall be unable to keep the secret. It is like a millstone around my neck; it makes a hell within my heart."

"What! and would you betray me? would you bring me to punishment for an offence which I have told you was involuntary, and which I unconsciously committed? Your sense of honour, apart

from your feeling of friendship, alone, should be sufficient to restrain you. I cannot believe that you would violate your pledge—that you can betray the confidence reposed in you."

Silenced, but not satisfied, and far more miserable than ever, the poor youth, whose nerves were daily becoming more and more unsteady and sensitive under these exciting influences, went away; but the next day he came again; his look was fixed and resolute, and an air of desperate decision marked every feature.

"I am about to go to the justice, Martin, to reveal all this story, precisely as you have told it to me. I cannot bear a continuance of life, haunted, as I have been, by innumerable terrors ever since I heard it. But last night, I heard the distinct denunciations of the murdered girl, couched in the strongest language, emphatically uttered in my ears. The whole scene was before me, and the horrors of the damned could not exceed those which encompassed my spirit. I fled from the chamber—from the house. In the woods I have passed the whole night in the deepest prayer. My determination is the result of the soundest conviction of its necessity. I can keep your secret no longer."

I paused for a moment, and having prepared

myself for all difficulties by a consideration of all the circumstances, I simply bade him—"Go, then, if you are determined upon the betrayal of your friend and the forfeiture of your honour."

"Reproach me not thus, Martin," was his reply. "Forgive me, but I must do so. I must either disclose all, or commit self-murder. I cannot keep within my bosom that which makes it an Ætna—which keeps it for ever in flame and explosion. Forgive—forgive me!" Thus speaking, he rushed from my presence.

CHAPTER XIII.

I was cited before the justice, and the testimony of William Harding, delivered with the most circumstantial minuteness, was taken down in my presence. Never did I see a more striking instance of conscience struggling with feeling—never had I conceived of so complete a conquest of one over the other. I denied all. I denied that I had ever made him such a statement—that we had ever had any such conversation; and, with the coolness and composure of veteran crime, wondered at the marvellous insanity of his representations. He was dumb—he looked absolutely terrified. Of course, however, in such an examination, my own statements were unavailing, and his were to be sustained by a reference to the localities, and such of the details which he had made, as might ostensibly contribute to its sustenance or overthrow. Search was made under the tree where my victim was alleged to have been buried. The earth appeared never to have been disturbed from the creation—upon digging, nothing was found. So with all other particulars. Harding's representa-

tions were confuted. He was regarded by all as a malignant wretch, who envied the felicity, and sought to sting the hand of him who had cherished and befriended him. The public regard fell away from him, and he was universally avoided. I affected to consider him the victim of momentary hallucination, and the Christian charity thus manifested became the admiration of all. I almost dreaded that I should be deified—made a deacon in life, and a saint after death.

Poor Harding sunk silently to his den. Sensitively alive to public opinion, as well as private regard, his mind reeled to and fro, like a storm-troubled vessel, beneath a shock so terrible and unexpected. He had lived upon the breath of fame—he was jealous of high reputation—he was tremblingly alive to those very regards of the multitude which were now succeeded by their scorn and hisses. What a blow had I given him!—but he was not yet to escape me. I suffered a day or two to elapse, and then sought him out in his chamber. I entered, and looked upon him for several minutes unobserved. His head was between his hands, and his chin rested upon the table. His air was that of the most woful hopelessness. The nature of his feelings might be inferred, along with his personal appearance from the nature of the com-

panions beside, and the general condition of things around, him. One boot was thrown off and lay upon the floor; the other, as if he had grown incapable of further effort, was permitted to remain upon his foot. The mirror lay in the smallest pieces about the room—the contemplation of his own features, blasted as they had been with the shame of his situation, having prompted him, as he came from the place of trial, to dash his hand through it. On the table, and on each side of him, lay—strangely associated—his Bible and his pistols. He had been about to refer, with an every-day philosophy, to one or the other of them for consolation. It was in this situation that I found him out. I brought with me increased tortures, while the people, who saw and wondered, gave me credit for Christian benevolence. How many virtues would put on the most atrocious features, could their true motives be pursued through the hive of venomous purposes that so frequently swarm and occupy the secret cells and caverns of the human heart!

He saw me at length, and, as if the associations which my presence had called up were too terrible for contemplation, he buried his head in his hands, and again thrust them on the table. As I approached, however, he started from this position—a mood

entirely new appeared to seize upon him, and, snatching the pistol which lay before him upon the table, he rushed to meet me. He placed it upon my bosom and deliberately cocked it, placing his finger at the same moment upon the trigger. A glare of hellish desperation flowed out from his eyes, as, with words that seemed rather shrieked than articulated, he exclaimed—

"And what is there that keeps me from destroying you? What should stay my hand—what should interpose to protect you from my just revenge—what should keep you from the retributive wrath which you have roused into fury?"

I made no movement—precipitation, or any act or gesture on my part, at that moment, would have been instant death. He would have felt his superiority. I maintained my position, and, without raising a finger, I replied, with the utmost deliberation—

"What should keep you from taking my life! What a question! Would you be answered? Your own fears—you know that I would haunt you."

The pistol dropped from his hands, and he trembled all over. I proceeded—

"You should have no peace—no moment of repose secure from my intrusion—no single hour you could call your own. I should link myself

to you, as Mezentius' dead, to his condemned and living, victim. I would come between you and your dearest joys, nor depart, for a solitary moment, from a share in all the unavoidable duties and performances of life. We should sit, side by side, at the same table—sleep in the same couch—dwell in the same dwelling. Would you rise to speak in the council, I should prompt your words—I should guide your action. Would you travel, I would mount the box and impel in the direction of my caprice. Would you love, I would figure in your courtship—go between yourself and mistress, and assist in your bridal. Your own wife should not have one half of the communion that I should enjoy with you!"

He was paralyzed with his agony.

"Terrible man!" he exclaimed, "what would you do with me? why am I made your victim? why do you persecute me? I have not wronged—I have not sought to wrong you. You, on the contrary, have destroyed me, and yet would pursue me further. You have been my evil genius."

"I know it—I deplore it."

"You deplore it! Horrible mockery! How shall I believe your speech after what has happened? Why deny the story yourself poured into my ears as the truth?"

"It was the truth."

"Yet you swore it was false!"

"Life is sweet—life is necessary, if not to human joys, at least to the opportunities of human repentance. Would you have me give myself to an ignominious death upon the scaffold—disgracing my family, dishonouring myself, and dooming all who shared in my communion to a kindred dishonour with myself?"

"Why, then, did you tell me of this crime?"

"I could not help it. The impulse was native and involuntary, and I could not disobey it. It would not be resisted. It burnt in my bosom as it has done in yours, and, until I had revealed it, I could hope for no relief."

"Dreadful alternative! Hear me, Martin Faber, hear me and pity me. You know my history, you know my hopes—my pretensions—my ambition. You know that for years, from my boyhood up, in despite of poverty, and the want of friends and relatives, I have been contending for glory—for a name. You know that the little world in which we live had begun to be friendly to my aspirations; that they looked on my progress with sympathy and encouragement; that they pointed to me as one likely to do them honour—to confer a name upon my country as well as upon myself. You

know that for years, in solitude, and throughout the long hours of the dark and wintry night, I have pursued my solitary toil for these objects. You know that I have shrunk from the society that has been wooing me; that I have denied myself all the enjoyments which are the life of other men; that I have, in short, been sacrificing the present for the future existence—the undying memory of greatness which it had been my hope to leave behind me. This you knew—this you know. In one hour—without an object—to satisfy a wanton caprice—you have overthrown all these hopes—you have made all these labours valueless—you have destroyed me. Those who loved, hate me—those who admired, contemn me—those who praised, now curse and denounce me as a wanton and malicious enemy, seeking the destruction of his friend! I am not only an exile from my species; I am banished from that which has been the life-blood of my being—the possession of a goodly, of a mighty name! I have no farther use in life."

"All is true—you have said but the truth. I am conscious of it all."

"Oh, speak not, I conjure you! I need not your assurances in my confirmation. I do not ask your voice. Hear me in what I shall say, and, if you

can, heal, as far as you may heal, the wounds you have inflicted."

"Speak on!"

"I will seek to reconcile myself to the condition —to the exile—to which you have driven me. I will struggle to give up the high hopes which have prompted and cheered me through the unalleviated and unlighted labours of my life—I will struggle to be—nothing! All I ask is that you should give me peace—permit me to sleep once more. Say that you have not committed the crime of which you have accused yourself. Give me this assurance, and free me from this gibbering and always present spectre, that, roused for ever by my fancies, refuses for ever to be gone!"

How easy to have granted his request! How impossible, indeed, would it appear to have refused an appeal urged under such circumstances. But I did refuse. I reiterated the story of my crime as I had uttered it before, without any variation, and the nervously susceptible youth sank down before me, in despair, upon the floor. In a moment, however, he arose, and—a smile was upon his lips. There was a fearful energy in his eye which had never marked it before, and which it surprised me not a little to survey. With a strong effort, he approached me.

"I will be no longer a child—I will shake off this fever of feeling which is destroying me. I will conquer these fancies—I will not be their slave. Shall I possess a mind so soaring and absolute, to bow down to the tyrant of my own imaginings? I will live for better things. I will make an effort!"

I applauded his determination, and persuaded him to go with me, as before, to my residence. This, though good policy with me, was the height of bad policy with him. The world looked upon me as the most forgiving and foolishly-weak philanthropist—a benevolent creation of the very finest water. The readiness with which Harding again sought my hospitality, after his charges against me, was, of course, still further in evidence against the honesty of his intentions. They looked upon his depravity as of the most heinous character, and numberless were the warnings which I hourly received, of the thousand stings which the—so called—serpent, was treasuring up for my bosom. But I affected to think differently. I put all that was wrong in his conduct down to a momentary aberration of intellect, and urged the beauty and propriety of Christian forgiveness. Was I not of a most saint-like temper? They thought so. How well did I know them—how little did they know me!

CHAPTER XIV.

It is strange that, with my extended and perfect knowledge of human character, and my great love of mental and moral analysis, I should have suffered myself to be taken in by these external shows on the part of my victim. Strange, that so sudden —so unlooked-for an alteration from his wonted habit, had not aroused my jealousy—my suspicion of some hidden motive. But my blindness was a part of my fate, or how should it have been that a creature so weak, so utterly dependant as Harding had ever been, should have deceived a spirit so lynx-eyed as mine. Led to consider him too greatly the victim of the nervous irritability by which, indeed, his every action and impulse was distinguished, I had not looked for the exercise, in his mind, of any of that kind of energy which would carry him undeviatingly and perseveringly to the attainment of any remote or difficult end, or to the accomplishment of a far and foreign purpose. I had neglected entirely to allow for the stimulating properties of a defeat, upon a mind which had only lived for a single object. I had refused to count

upon the decision of character which might, by probability, arise in a mind, however, in all other respects, variable and vacillating, when concentrating itself upon the attainment of a single desire, and that, too, of a kind so absorbing, so all-impelling as the acquisition of fame. I did not recollect that Harding had himself acknowledged the existence of one only passion in his bosom, or I should have seen that his present change of manner was but a thin veil disguising and concealing some ulterior project subservient to the leading object of his spirit. I failed, therefore—fool that I was—to perceive the occult design which, of a sudden, had so completely altered all the obvious characteristics of my companion—his habits, his temper, and his hopes. Folly to suppose that, with the loss of public estimation, he would be content with life unless with a desperate effort to regain his position. And how could he regain that position? How, but by establishing my guilt, and his innocence of all malevolent intention? And such was his design. Assured, as he now was, that I was, in truth, a criminal—that I had committed the murder of which I had accused myself, and that I had only so varied the statement of its particulars as to mislead and defeat inquiry—and looking forward to the one single object—that of restoring himself

to the popular regards of which I had deprived him —he was determined, of himself, to establish my crime—to trace the story from the very imperfect data I had myself given him, and by perpetual associations with myself, and a close examination into my moral make, to find out the materials of evidence which should substantiate his now defeated accusations. How blind was I not to have perceived his object—not to see through his unaccustomed artifices! The genius—the gigantic genius of his mind, will be best comprehended from this curious and great undertaking, and from the ingenuity and indefatigable industry with which he pursued it to the end. Nor, from this fact alone, but coupled, as under existing circumstances was the pursuit adopted, his strength of character and firmness of mind are of the most wonderful description. The task was attended with an association which, for a protracted period of time, still further exposed him to the scornful execrations and indignation of those for whose good opinion, alone, he was voluntarily about to undergo all this additional load of obloquy. Under these aspects the effort was a high-souled and sublime one, and furnished one of the best proofs of the moral elevation of his genius. I regard it now, when too late to arrest

its exercise and progress, with a sentiment little short of wonder and admiration."

All these occurrences had, of course, been made known to my wife; and shocked and terrified as she had been—torn and distracted between a sense of duty to myself and a feeling of deep, but unexpressed regard for my accuser—when, for the first time after the trial, I brought him to the house, with a highly proper spirit, seeing the affair as she had seen it, she declined making her appearance. I insisted upon it.

"How can you require such a thing?" was her very natural inquiry. "Whatever may have been his motive, has he not sought your life? Has he not brought a foul and false accusation against you, making you a criminal of the darkest die?"

"Look at me, Constance," I said, in reply, as I took one of her hands in mine; "I am the criminal. I committed the crime he charged upon me, and which I myself had revealed to him. His accusation, so far as he was concerned, was neither foul nor false!"

And wherefore did I tell her this? Why should I have multiplied the evidence against me? why put myself at the mercy of another? It might be enough to say that I did not fear that Constance would betray me. As she was a pure and delicate

woman, her love for him—treasured up in secret, and a source of trembling and self-reproach, as I knew it must be, to her heart—was my sufficient security. She would not have linked her testimony with his, however she might have hated me and loved him, fearing that her motives might be subject to the suspicion of others, as she herself would have suspected them. This consideration would have left me without fear in that quarter, but this was not a consideration with me in telling her the story. I could not refrain from telling it; in spite of myself I was compelled to do so—it was my fate.

I shall not attempt to describe her horror. She was dumb, and, in silence, descended with me to the apartment in which Harding had been left. To him this was a moment of fearful ordeal. The woman he loved, though hopelessly, he had struck through her husband. He was not to know that I had most effectually acquitted him, to her, of the offence for which he anticipated her scorn and hatred. His anxiety and wretchedness were again manifest until she relieved him, as, with a boldness of spirit which I had never before seen her manifest, she walked forward, took his hand, and welcomed him as if nothing had happened. He looked first to me, then to her, and silently, with a tearful

eye, and frame violently agitated, he carried her hand to his lips. She retreated, and was deeply confused by this act. I saw her inmost soul, at that moment, in her face. Why had she not loved me as she loved him? Why, oh, why!

That night, in my chamber, I said to her, "You love this youth—speak not—I would not have you deny it. I will tell you more—would you know it?—he loves you too, and there are few persons in the world more deserving the love of one another. Were I dead to-morrow, you would most probably make the discovery, and—"

"Oh, Martin Faber, I see not why you should torment me in this manner. For heaven's sake, let me have peace. Make not all miserable about you; or, if you are bent on making me so, let not your malice exercise itself still further on this unhappy youth, whose life you have already imbittered, whose prospects you have blighted, and to whom every hour of association with yourself must work additional evil. Persuade him, for the repose of all, to leave the country."

"Would you fly with him? Beware, woman! Think not to deceive me—I see into your heart, and understand all its sinuosities. Look that your interest in this enthusiast gets not the better of your duty."

She turned her head upon the pillow, and sobbed bitterly—yet how wantonly had I uttered these reproaches! The angels were not more innocent in spirit than was she at that moment, when I had inflicted upon her the tortures of the damned.

CHAPTER XV.

I AM now rather to relate the labours of another than of myself, and to record the progress of Harding, in the newly-assumed duties of his life, of which, to their termination, I had little, if any suspicion.

In accordance with his design, and in this respect my own habits and disposition favoured him largely, he was with me at all hours—we were inseparable. He pretended a taste for gunning, and though a poor sportsman, provided with the usual accoutrements, he would sally forth with me, day after day, in the pursuit of the game in which the neighbouring country was plentifully supplied. Day by day, at all hours, in all places, we were still together, and seemingly in the same pursuit; yet did we not always hunt. We chose fine rambles—pleasant and devious windings of country, secluded roads, hills and dales, and deep forests, in which a moody and reflective spirit might well indulge in its favourite fancies. Of this make were we both. To-day we were in one direction, to-morrow in another, until the neighbouring world

and woods, for an extent, in some quarters, of twenty miles, became familiar to us in our excursions. I was struck with Harding's new habit of observation. In our rambles before, he had seen, or appeared to see, nothing. Now, nothing escaped his notice and attention. Tree and stump—hill and vale—wood and water—all grew familiar, and a subject of large and narrow examination. He seemed particularly solicitous of the true relations of things—of parallel distances—objects of comparative size, and the dependances of a group, in the compass of his survey. As he had a great fondness for landscape drawing, and some skill in the art, I put these peculiarities down to the account of this propensity, and gave myself no concern about it; but not unfrequently, turning suddenly, would I detect the fixed gaze of his eye fastened inquiringly upon my own. On such occasions he would turn aside with a degree of confusion, which did not, however, provoke my suspicions. There was no object in these wanderings that seemed too humble for his survey. He peered into every cup of the hills—into hollow trees—groped his way through the most thickly spread and seemingly impervious undergrowth, and suffered no fatigue, and shrunk back from no difficulty. Having hit upon a new spot which looked romantic or dark, he would, before

its examination, closely watch my progress, the direction which I took, and the peculiar expression of my face. These practices were not unseen by me at the time, but I regarded them as having no object—I was certainly blind to their true one. It is only now that the mystery of his mind is unveiled—that his newborn daring is accounted for—that he now appears the rational and strong spirit I had never before considered him.

We had now, in these rambles, taken, with the exception of a single one, every possible route leading into the neighbouring country. Bold and daring as I was, I had always avoided the path which led to the little islet and the scenes of my crime, though certainly, without exception, the most beautiful and attractive among them. This had not escaped his attention, though he had so contrived it as not to appear to have a care, or even to be conscious, of the route we were to pursue. It now happened, however, that we were called upon to retread spots which had grown familiar, and more than once my companion would exclaim—

"Have we not been here before—can we not take some new direction?"

Still I avoided the route too well known already to me, and still he had not ventured to propose taking it. He would not alarm my suspicions by

a suggestion, though one which would have been so perfectly natural. He took another mode to effect his purpose; and one day, just as we were about to pass the little hollow in the woods which led directly upon the path I so much wished to avoid, he saw, or pretended to see, some game which attracted him, and, without saying more, he darted into the avenue. I was compelled to follow; and slowly, and with feelings I was ashamed to possess, but could not control, I prepared to call up to my mind the whole history of crime and terror, already sufficiently vivid to the eye of my memory. We pursued the devious route, and once more I found myself retracing a region which, though for months untrodden, was still as freshly in my recollection as when I made it the field of exercise for all the black and blasting passions running then riot in my soul. On we went, from point to point, of all the places in my memory, each of which had its distinct association, and spoke audibly to my spirit of some endearment or reproach, some sorrow or delight. Here was the little lake—here the islet where I first discovered her. Here the scene of her dishonour and of my triumph—here the place of our usual meeting, and here—the spot upon which she perished under my hands. I strove not to look. I felt all things too

vividly in my soul; and though I closed my eyes, I could not shut out the images of terror which were momentarily conjured up by my imagination. I strove to gaze in all quarters but that which witnessed our struggle and my crime, but my eyes invariably turned at last and settled down on the one spot, where, at length, I beheld, under the influence of my imagination, the distinct outline of her figure, as it had, at the time, appeared before me. Slowly it seemed to rise from its recumbent posture, and, while I breathed not, I beheld it proceed along the road which I had taken when bearing the inanimate burden—from which that now guiding spirit had for ever departed—to its place of final slumber in the body of the rock, which stood rigidly in the distance. I followed it, unconsciously, with my eyes. My respiration had utterly ceased—my hair was moist yet active—my lips were colourless and cold, and my cheeks were ashen pale. A palsying wind seemed to penetrate my bones, and, though not a joint trembled, yet they were all powerless. I became conscious at last of my condition and appearance, from discovering the eyes of Harding anxiously bent upon mine, and following in the direction of their gaze. There was something so expressive, so earnest, in his look, that, though yet utterly unsuspicious of his design,

I was, nevertheless, not a little struck, and somewhat offended by his seeming curiosity. I recovered myself the instant after making this discovery, and turned abruptly upon him. As if detected in an impropriety, his eyes fell, in evident confusion, from the look which I gave him; and tacitly, without a word, we prepared to proceed in our ramble. Not willing to suggest a solitary movement, while in this region, which should prompt doubt or inquiry, I left the choice of road to himself, and saw, with some concern, that we were now taking the direct route to the cottage of old Andrews, the father of Emily. I had no fear of exposure from any such interview, for I had so contrived it, that all suspicion had been diverted from myself in the minds of the family. I had busied myself in the little inquiries that had been made into her fate—had pretended not a small portion of sorrow and regret—had made sundry presents, which, in the depressed condition in which they lived, had readily contributed still more to their blindness; and never having been recognised, in the dotage of the old man, as the boy who had contributed to his first great misfortune, I had escaped all imputations on the subject of the second. Besides, I had taken care to visit them frequently, though privately, for a short period of time after the event, and felt

secure that I had no other position in their regard than that of confiding and friendly consideration. But the subject had become irksome; and, in addition to this fact, I had, for the first time, revolved in my mind the possibility, that my companion, coupling the conversation of the family, which would most probably turn upon the fate of their daughter, with my own story, might be enabled to gather from the particulars such information as would open the trail, and prepare the way for further evidence. But the cautious policy of Harding silenced my alarm; and, indeed, my great error, from the first, consisted in the humble estimate I had been taught to make of his character for firmness. There is no greater mistake than in despising him to whom you have given any reason to become an enemy. Where there is mind, injury will engender malice; and where there is malice, there is a ceaseless prompter which will one day couple the venom with the sting. Self-esteem, in exaggerating my own strength to myself, had also taught me to undervalue that of others:—in this way I assisted his pursuit, and helped him on to his object.

We came soon upon the cottage. The old man sat glowering in idiotic abstraction in a corner chair, which he kept in a continual rocking motion. His

mind seemed utterly gone, and, though he spoke to both, he appeared to recognise neither of us. His wife was glad to see me, and thanked me repeatedly for some articles of dress which I had sent her a few months before, since which period, until then, I had not seen her. An unavoidable association called up the memory of Emily, and the tears of the old woman were again renewed. Harding, with an air of commonplace inquiry, and a manner of the most perfect indifference, almost amounting to unconsciousness, inquired into the story to which she had referred, and, while she told it as far as it was known to herself, busied himself in plaiting into something like form the remains of a handful of osiers which he had plucked on the way. He felt that, at such a moment and occasion, my jealousy, if I were really guilty, must be particularly active; and took care, therefore, to avoid the expression of much curiosity. Yet his very indifference, had not my fate otherwise ordained, should have alarmed my watchfulness, so utterly different did it appear from the emotion which he usually expressed when called upon to listen to a narrative so sorrowful and touching. But he heard it as if in a dream. His mind seemed wandering, and I was lulled into the most complete security. Never was indifference so well enacted—never had mor-

tal been more attentive to a history than Harding to this. All its details had been carefully treasured up, and where the old lady had associated me with the adventures of her daughter, his mind had taken deep note, and the record in his memory was ineradicably written. Over the chimney-place stood a rude portrait of the murdered girl, to which, when the old lady called for his attention to her beautiful features, he scarcely gave a glance; and he, whom destiny had selected to bring the murderer of her child to punishment, provoked openly the anger of the mother by his glaring inattention to the story of her supposed fate. We left the cottage after a somewhat protracted visit. I had no single concern—not the slightest apprehension—so completely had my companion played his part in the transaction; but he had not lost a word, not a look, not an action, in all the events of that morning. His eye was for ever upon me—his thoughts were dissecting mine, and the most distant association of cause and effect, drawn vividly together by his intellect, quickened into sleepless exercise and energy by the influences acting upon it, supplied him with the materials for commencing the true history of my crime.

We passed the rock on our return. I could not keep my eyes from it, and his eyes were on mine.

He saw the same ashy paleness of my cheek and look, and he saw that this rock had something to do with my history. In the analysis of a story like mine, so terribly romantic as it was, his imagination became a prime auxiliary, and, with its aid, where a dull man would have paused for facts, with the felicity of truth it supplied them. He grew strong and confident in each hour of his progress in this labour.

CHAPTER XVI.

We had in our village, among its other wonders, a small building, which, by a stretch of liberal indulgence, had been denominated "the Academy of Fine Arts." It was almost our only lion, and we made the most of it. Its collection was poor enough and large enough, and always on the increase, from the habit prevailing among a few of our domestic artists of sending their pictures to the gallery, as frequently for sale as exhibition. This kept the collection always new; and consequently, to a certain extent, always interesting. It was a favourite lounge for this and for other reasons. In connexion with the establishment, an adjoining apartment had been given up to the village library, and there we got our books, and read the newspapers from all parts of the country. As we had our politicians, too, so we had our discussions; and thus, in a country like ours, where disputation is the mental small-beer of all classes, we had an additional attraction for the crowd, in the eloquence of our disputants. From the picture-gallery we ad-

journed to the library, from the library to the reading-room, and the transition was not great from the perusal of the journal to the forensic analysis of its contents. This apartment was a complete bear-garden—but our business is not there at this moment.

A week had not well elapsed after the ramble of Harding and myself, narrated in the previous chapter, when, lounging with my wife through the gallery aforesaid, I beheld one picture, crowded among the hundred upon its walls, from which I could not turn my eyes. It filled me with astonishment while awakening in my mind a thousand apprehensions—more painful, as they were vague and intangible. It depicted the scene of my crime —the crime itself—as truly done to nature (so my fancy assured me) as if the artist himself had surveyed its execution. There was the little copse upon the neck of land, the stream running alongside in faithful affinity—there lay the female form, pale and shadowy, and with, as I thought, a sufficient resemblance to Emily to have been held a portrait. She was painted as dead, and in the distance, moving off in the shadow of the wood, and with face averted, the figure of a man, which the active fear within me assured me was intended for myself. You may guess my emotion. My wife,

who was with me, was struck with the picture, and annoyed me by her conjectures as to what could be its design. Her reference was to some pagan story—had she looked that moment in my face, she had not gone so far for the subject. Having recovered from the first shock, I inspected the piece more closely; and finding it for sale, from the label, I affected to be pleased with it, and paid its price to the keeper of the collection, who was its proprietor, having bought it (a great bargain, he said) from an old woman who was entirely unknown. Having secured it in my possession, and after examining it closely, I was more and more confirmed in the opinion that the whole of it had been copied from that dreadful event in my own history—such was my fear—my reason, indeed, suggesting innumerable parallel subjects for the exercise of the artist's fancy, having no connexion with me. The mysterious manner in which the piece had been sold to the academy contributed to my fears, and into this particular I had not the courage to inquire. I dreaded to increase my knowledge. After I had sufficiently indulged my curiosity, I took my wife into the apartment to which it had been carried.

"Constance!" I exclaimed, "look on this picture, and you see my story. This picture imbod-

ies the tale I gave you and Harding some months ago. Do you remember it?"

She looked into my face with that uncertainty of glance which one might be supposed to wear when doubting the sanity of a companion. I went on—

"It is true, Constance. In that very wood so described, the girl, whose features you there see, became twice my victim. I took from her her honour, and finally her life. The artist who has described it, has done so narrowly."

"Heavens! and you speak so coolly—will you stay here, Faber?"

"Wherefore not? I tell you, Constance, you are not yet free."

And, apprehensive as I was, I could not yet restrain the malignant spirit which luxuriated always in the sensibilities and sorrows of others. She only wept, while, in her presence—for I knew she dared not tell the story—I cut up the telltale fabric with my knife, and saw the fragments, one by one, consuming in the flames. Fool that I was in all this—to suppose that the avenger of blood could be satisfied—to think that the artist had not other copies. So it was! Another and another, to the number of three, giving various aspects of the transaction, appeared in time upon the walls of the acad-

emy. I was too sagacious, however, to purchase any more. I had now begun to tremble! Still I had not the slightest suspicion of the author; and though my thoughts were restlessly employed upon the subject, they wandered to all persons, and conjectured all things, but the right. Still, daily, did Harding and myself pursue our rambles, and each day, through his adroit ingenuity, yielded something more to the stock of that evidence with which he was to overwhelm me. By degrees he had penetrated in all directions of that fatal wood; and, at length, our footsteps were bent, as in the most casual manner, up the steep sides of the rock, and over the very path which, burdened with the dead body of Emily Andrews, I had once journeyed alone. My eyes were again riveted upon that fearful chasm—I heard the dead fall of her delicate form, as it struck from side to side in its passage down—I heard the clattering of the loosened stones which had accompanied and followed her; and, at length, the same subtle imagination which had revived all the circumstances vividly before one sense, arrayed her reanimated form as vividly before another. I saw her arise from the chasm, pale and ghastly, as when I had seen her descend. For a moment the spell of terror fixed every faculty, and, in that moment, the searching glance of my com-

panion had gathered much towards the formation of his testimony. He had followed the direction of my glance, and the chasm, half concealed in the umbrage, and not very obvious to the gaze, grew distinctly before him. I recovered from the trance slowly, which had so stupified me, and we returned to the village.

In a few days more and another scene, to me full of dreadful significance, stood up prominently in the collection of the academy. How well his imagination understood mine! How subtly, where all reason must have been at fault, had its nice and daring perceptions discovered the clue leading to the innermost soul and darkest secret of the criminal! There was the rock—there the chasm—and just above it, in a dim haze that made the outline and expression, but did not impair the felicity of the portrait, stood the phantom person of Emily, as my fancy had pictured it to my sight but a few days before. "God of heaven!" I exclaimed, in the bitterness of my fear, "what demon is it that can so imbody—so torture me with my own dreadful imaginings?" Through the means of an agent—vainly foolish as before—I secured this new accuser, and destroyed it in like manner with the first. But, horrible! another self made its appearance, and, in despair, I gave up the hope of arresting, in

this manner, the progress of that mysterious inquiry, which, taking a form so equivocal and so silently industrious, was, in consequence, so doubly terrible. But Harding, for he was the artist, did not content himself with probing, in this stern but strange manner, the secrets of my soul, by an exercise of my fears and fancies. He privately took his way to the family of the murdered girl. He ascertained the day and date of her absence—took careful note of our association—of the expectations that had been formed in their minds, not less than in the mind of Emily herself, from the attentions I had paid her; and, though the true nature and extent of our connexion had been totally unsuspected by her parents, our intimacy had been such as to warrant a belief that, in the progress of events, something must necessarily grow out of it. He found that we had been almost in the daily habit of meeting, and in the very wood in which he had first perceived my terrors. He learned that, in dragging the stream in its neighbourhood, no traces had been found of the victim—that a search, made shortly after she had been missing, and on the same day, throughout the country, for many miles, had been ineffectual. He was conscious that few places of concealment offered themselves in the circuit so examined, except in the cavity of rock to

which his mind had already adverted; and, associating the ill-disguised apprehension and horror which I had exhibited while upon it, he came to the rapid conclusion that the mystery was to be developed there. Yet, how was he now to proceed? There was still something wanting to unite together the several links in the chain of testimony which he had so assiduously and singularly woven. The circumstances, though strong, were not at all conclusive against me; and, having succeeded so poorly in the first instance, and with the public prejudice so strongly against him, he might well dread the overthrow of his design, in the event of any premature and partial development. Though perfectly satisfied that the chasm contained the remains of the murdered girl, he was yet well convinced how little the mere development of the body would avail, unless with some identifying circumstance, fixing the crime upon me. Accordingly, he devoted himself busily to the task of tracing, in the details of the mother, all the particulars of my intimacy with the daughter. In this scrutiny he happened upon, read carefully, and copied, a single note, having my initials merely, but without date, which I had sent her, enclosing some ornaments for her person, and engaging to meet her on some day in the ensuing week. The style of expression

was guarded in the extreme, and indicated the feelings of one who esteemed the individual he addressed with a respectful consideration, which, though not love itself, might, in time, become so. The absence of a date, alone, presented a difficulty which was only overcome by a single passage which the note contained. It spoke of pressing engagements for a term of some days, which would so occupy the attention of the writer as to leave him no opportunity of seeing her for that period, unless that which the note suggested was embraced. What engagements were there of so pressing a character upon me? Harding knew as well as myself the nature of my employments, and felt assured that the assertion was either false, or that the note had been written at the time when my marriage arrangements had been made—the only circumstance he conceived likely to have been looked to, in my mind, as calculated to interfere with the pursuit of any humbler object. This was conjectural, however; yet the conjecture furnished him with an additional clue, which he suffered not to escape him. The old lady could say nothing as to the period when the note had been received; but the jewels were shown him, and, carefully noting down their kinds and qualities, he proceeded to the several shops of our village in which such

articles were sold. He inspected all of corresponding description, and, submitting those in question, he at length found out to whom, and when, they had been sold. The dates were supplied, and were so far found to correspond with events, that it was indubitable that, but four days after their purchase by myself, Emily Andrews had been lost to her family. The circumstances were now almost imbodied in the estimation of the law; and, assured, but still unprecipitate, Harding prepared, calmly and quietly, the whole narrative, and awaited impatiently the operation of looked-for events to unfold the entire history. And the time came!

CHAPTER XVII.

FATE had me in its power, and I was blind. If I were not weak enough, of myself, to reveal the secrets of my soul and its crimes, I was not less the creature of a destiny, which, in the end, set at naught my profoundest cunning, and proved my wisdom to be the arrantest folly. I look back now with wonder at my own stupidity. A single survey into existing things, as in all other concerns I had certainly made it, and I should have laughed all inquisition to scorn. Now I am its victim—the shallow victim of a most shallow design. Thus it is, however, that the wisest suffer defeat through a self-esteem which leads them into wrong, not merely in their estimate of themselves, but in their estimate of others. Thus was it with me; and well, from my own experience, may I exclaim with the ancient, "*fata viam invenient.*"

Yet was I not unwarned—unthreatened. I had a presentiment that something was to happen—I was uneasy, discontented, wandering. My spirits were dreadfully depressed, and, but half conscious, I took my way to the secluded cottage of Harding.

Unannounced, I entered his study, and found him —on his knees, at prayer. A strange feeling possessed me, and I was almost tempted to kneel down beside him. But I dared not—I had never been taught to worship—I had never been taught to bend the knee, and tones of supplication were foreign to my sense and unfamiliar to my lips. Could I have knelt at that moment, and fervently prayed for the grace I had not, I feel satisfied the heart of my companion would have relented of all its purposes. He would not, at that moment, have arrested the new-born exercises of a spirit so redeeming and atoning. The moment of indulgence was permitted to escape, and the fiat had gone forth. The doom was upon me!

We sallied forth, as had been, for so long a period, our morning custom. A grave solemnity marked the expression of Harding's countenance, mixed, at intervals, as we grew more and more communicative, with a faltering hesitation of manner, indicating, it is more than probable, a relaxing of his purpose. I can now comprehend all his feelings and emotions. His position was, indeed, a strange and sad one. Under a sense of duty the most sacred, not merely to the community, but to himself, he had undertaken the punishment of a criminal with whom he was in the daily habit of

close communion—to whom, in worldly matters, he was somewhat indebted, and in whose welfare he had at heart, and sincerely, a deep interest. The task of hypocrisy which he assumed, sufficiently painful to a mind like his, was doubly irksome under the operation of such circumstances; and I am assured that could he, at that moment, have been persuaded of a change of heart in me—had I given him the slightest reason to believe that my crimes were regretted, and that it was my fixed purpose to become a better man—he would, even then, just as the curtain was about to be drawn which would unveil the whole catastrophe, have stayed his uplifted hand—he would rather have suffered the tortures of his imagination, and the rebukes of his ambition, than have cut off the penitent in his first approaches to pardon and atonement. But, at this very moment, I uttered some vile jest—discreditable to manhood and morality alike—and the spell was broken. He was strengthened in his purpose, and, solemnly, he led the way, I following, unconsciously, to my own sacrifice.

A sudden turn brought us directly upon the scene of my crime, and there, to my surprise, a goodly company was assembled.

"What is this?" was my exclamation. "Why

are so many of the villagers here? Know you, William, what is meant by this assemblage?"

"We shall see!" was his sudden and somewhat stern reply, as we continued to approach. My heart trembled, and leaped convulsively to my mouth—my knees faltered, but there was no retreat. We came up to the company, before whom my appearance had scarcely been made, when, wildly from the group, rushed forth the mother of Emily—she seized me by my arm.

"Give me back my daughter," was her phrensied exclamation; "you will not keep her from me. My daughter—my poor, sweet Emily."

They dragged her back to the spot where, feebly, and with an expression of subdued idiocy, old Andrews incessantly shook his stick in the direction where I stood, while his palsied head maintained a corresponding motion. I recovered myself, but my tones were husky and thick, and, I am satisfied, not so coherent as I could have wished them.

"What does all this mean, my friends? why this charge upon me—why this gathering?" was my inquiry.

"This gentleman will explain," said the justice, pointing to Harding, who had by this time taken a place midway between the company and myself;

"You are charged," continued the officer, "with having first seduced, then spirited away, the daughter of these old people—one Emily Andrews; and, for your sake, Mr. Faber, I sincerely hope that you may be able to establish your innocence in spite of the strong circumstances which, it is said, will be brought against you."

I looked to Harding—I sought to crush him with that look—but he was untroubled, unappalled beneath it; and, though trembling with emotion, as seemingly determined in intention as the martyr, fortifying, if not establishing his faith, by the free offering of his blood. He proceeded, modestly but confidently, to his narration. He recounted the history of our intimacy—described once more the circumstances of the revelation which I had made to him of my crime—how it had burnt in his brain like so many living coals—how he had come in his agony to me; and how, finally, in order to escape from the suggestions of torture inflicted upon him by conscience and imagination, he had revealed it, as it had before been heard, to the officers of justice. He showed how he had been overthrown by the search made in accordance with the story—how, writhing under the reproaches of the public, and crushed in their opinion, he had been on the verge of madness and suicide—how I

had sought him out in his closet, repeated my story, and how he had again believed it. A certain something, he said, assured him that I had told the truth, but not the whole truth—that I had suppressed and altered so as to defeat inquiry; but that, though the causes which had led me to disclose so much unnecessarily were unknown and unaccountable, he was taught, at length, really to believe in the commission of the crime. A desire to regain his station in society—to show that nothing of slander or malice had prompted him in the first instance, inspired him with the design, which, carried out perseveringly and properly, had resulted in his being able, he thought, most satisfactorily to prove the murder of Emily Andrews by Martin Faber; and, accordingly, he proceeded to the development of his particulars. How did I curse my own blindness as he proceeded in his narration! How did I wonder at the ingenuity with which, without any clue, he had unravelled, as it were with my own fingers, all my secret! He had watched all my motions—all my looks—all my words. He had suffered not a glance—not a whisper to escape him. With the assistance of his mother, who, herself in disguise, had sold them, he had carried on the affair of the pictures—he discovered who had bought them, and, conjecturing for what pur-

pose, he defied me to produce them. He described the involuntary terrors which my face had exhibited on approaching the spot upon which we stood—how the same emotion, so exhibited, had led him to suspect that the rock to which he pointed had also some connexion with the transaction. The facts gathered from the conversations with the family, leading to the final, and, as he thought, conclusive proof in reference to the jewellery, he next dwelt upon; and, with a brief but compact summary, he so concentrated the evidence, that, though strictly speaking still inconclusive, there was not an individual present but was persuaded of my guilt.

"And now," said he, "there is but one more witness for examination, and this is the rock of which I have spoken. I am persuaded that the body of Emily Andrews lies there. The expression of Faber's eye—the whole look with which he surveyed the chasm—could not have come from nothing. That rock, in some way or other, is associated with his crime. I have made arrangements for its examination, and we shall soon judge."

Placing a little ivory whistle to his lips, a shrill sound went through the forest, and, after the lapse of a moment, a sudden flash illuminated, and a loud explosion shook, the earth around us. We pro-

ceeded to the spot, and, when the smoke had cleared away, a shout from those who traversed the fragments torn from the fissure, which had been split by gunpowder, announced the discovery of the victim; and, in her hands—conclusive evidence against me—torn from my bosom without my knowledge, while in the last convulsions of death—lay the large brooch, the loss of which had given me so much concern at the time; and on its back, chased finely in the gold setting, were the initials of my name. There was no longer any doubt—they seized upon and dragged me to prison.

CHAPTER XVIII.

He came to me in my dungeon—he, my accuser —my enemy—my friend. In the first emotions of my wrath, I would have strangled him if I could, and I shook my chains in his face, and I muttered savage curses and deep threats in his ears. He stood patiently and unmoved. His hands were clasped, and his eyes were dim, and for a while he had no language—no articulation.

"Think not," at last he spoke—"think not I have come to this work with a feeling of satisfaction. I have suffered more agony in its progress than I can well describe, or you understand—I will not attempt it. If you cannot, from what you know of my character, conceive the grief and sickness of heart which must have come over me, during the long period and regular and frequent succession of hours in which I was required to play the hypocrite—I cannot teach it you. I come not for this. I come to ask your forgiveness—to implore your better opinion—and that you may attribute to a necessity which gave me no other alterna-

tives than death or shame, the whole of this painful episode in my life."

He was a noble creature, and so I could not but think at that very moment; but I was of the earth —earthy! I was a thing of comprehensive malignity, and my impulses were perpetually warring with the suggestions of my better reason. I may not wonder at my madness, though even then I knew it to be such.

"My blood be upon your head—my ignominy be yours—the curses of all of mine be on you—may all things curse you. Talk of my being a murderer—are you less so? Have you not hurried me to death—to a shameful death—dishonouring myself—dishonouring my family—when, probably, I might have atoned for the error of my youth, in the progress and better performances of my age? This is your religion, is it? this your love for me—for man! Hypocrite that you are, begone! Come not falsely now to extenuate what you may not excuse—your priestly cant about forgiveness does not deceive me. Away—I curse you to the last!" And his head sank upon his breast, and his hands were clasped in agony, and I exulted in the writhings and gnawings of that heart whose over-delicate structure, I well knew, could never sustain such reproaches.

"Spare me! spare me! As I live, you do me wrong. Be not so merciless—so unforgiving. Fame, and the world's good opinion, were to me the breath of life. I could not have done other than I did, and lived—I could not."

"Looked you, then, to me to do it? Was the world's good opinion nothing to me? Had I nothing to live for? Had I no aim in life? Oh—away! I sicken but to see you."

Patiently, amid all my reproaches, he persisted in the endeavour to conciliate my fiendish mood, suggesting a thousand excuses and reasons for the obvious duty which I myself felt he had done to himself and to society—but I rejected them all; and, in despair, he was about to retire, when a sudden thought came over me.

"Stay, William—there is one thing—there is one way in which I can be assured that your motive was not malicious, and that you have been stimulated, as you say, solely by a belief in the necessity of what you have done."

"Speak, say any thing, but grant me your forgiveness—give me your good opinion!"

"Ridiculous! the good opinion of a murderer—the hated—the despised of the community—of what good is it to you or to anybody?"

"True! true! but even with the murderer I

would be at peace—I would not have him die with an ill feeling towards me. But there is yet another thought which prompts the desire in this case. It is from my associate and companion that I would have forgiveness, for the violation of that confidence which grew out of that association. For this I would have your forgiveness!"

"The distinction is somewhat nice, but you shall have what you ask—cheerfully have it—upon one condition."

"What is that?—say on—I will gladly serve you."

"Justice demands a victim, and I must die; but it is not necessary to justice that I should die in a particular manner. I would not die by the rope, in the presence of a gaping multitude; you must provide me with a dagger—a knife—any thing by which I may free myself from the ignominy of such a death."

"Impossible! that will be wrong—it will be criminal. Justice, it is true, may not care whether the rope or the steel shall serve her purposes, but she requires that her officer, at least, shall do it; otherwise it is not her act. It is your will, not hers, that would be performed—her claim would be defeated."

"Shallow sophistry! this, then, is your friend-

ship—but I knew it would be so—away, and may—"

He stopped me in my curse.

"Stay!"—he exclaimed hurriedly, and with terror—"any thing but that. I will do as you require."

CHAPTER XIX.

The day of retribution—of a fearful trial—is come! Horrible mockery! The sunlight streams through the iron grating, and falls upon the straw of this accursed dungeon. How beautifully—how wooingly it looks, lovelier than ever, about to be for ever lost! Do I tremble—would I yet live and linger out the hours in a life of curses, among those who howl their denunciations for ever in my ears? Could I survive this exposure—this infamy, and cherish life on any terms and at all hazards! I would not die—not thus, not thus—on that horrible scaffolding—I shudder but to think on it. Yet what hope would I rely upon? I have none to whom, in this perilous hour, I could turn in expectation. No fond spirit now labours, unsleepingly, for my relief. I have not lived for such an interest—I have not sought to enlist such affections—none hope—none seek my escape—none would assist in its consummation! I am alone—I must die! and what—horrible thought!—if he should not bring the weapon?—if his shrinking and woman-

like conscience should scruple still to interfere with the decree of justice, and I should be led out in the accursed cart, through the jeering multitude, and go through all the trials of that death of shame and muscular agony! Let me not think of it—let me not think!

And I closed my eyes as if to shut out thought, and rushed to the extremest corner of my cell, despairing of the appearance of Harding with the dagger he had promised. But a few hours were left, and the sharp and repeated strokes of the hammer, at a little distance, indicated the rapid progress of the executioner in his preparations for the terrible performance of his office. I groaned in my agony of thought, and buried my head still deeper in the meshes of my couch. But I lay not long in this hopelessness of soul. Thanks, thanks! the fates be praised—he comes—the bolts shoot back—the doors are unbarred—he is here! I shall not stand, then, on that fearful fabric! they shall not see the wretch writhe and dangle in his pain, for their amusement! He brings me that which shall enable me to give them my defiance, and disappoint the gaping multitude, already beginning to assemble. I shall defeat them still!

"Oh, Harding, I had almost given you up—I had begun to despond—to despair. I dreaded that

the weakness of your spirit had yielded to your conscience, and that you had forgotten your pledge. God of terror! what a horrible agony the thought brought along with it! It is well you came. I had else cursed you with spectres that would have fastened on you like wolves. They would have drained the blood, at the same moment, from all the arteries in your system. Give me the knife."

"It is here, and, oh! Martin, I have had a terrible struggle with my own sense of what is right in the performance of this office. I have resisted the suggestions of conscience—I have overcome the rebukes of my own mind—I have done wrong, and do not seek to excuse myself—but I have brought you what you desired. Here, take it—take it at once, and quickly, before I repent me of having so weakly yielded in the struggle."

"I have it—I have it!" I shouted wildly, as I seized it, shaking the naked blade, as if in defiance, in the direction of the scaffold. "I am secure from that shame—I shall not be the capped and culprit thing of ignominy which they would make me, in the eyes of that morbid rabble. I am free from the dishonour of such a death. Ah, Harding, thou hast almost redeemed thy fault—thou hast almost taught me to forgive thee for thy offending. Nay, I could almost forbear to howl my curses in thy

ears, and avoid saying to thee, as I do, may the furies tug at thy vitals like snakes, in all hours—"

"Forbear, forbear!" he shrieked. "Oh, cruel—wantonly cruel as thou art—where is thy promise, Martin—where is thy honour—wilt thou deceive me?"

"Ha! ha! ha! fool that thou art—didst thou not deceive and betray me? Where was thy honour, false hypocrite—where was thy forbearing mercy? Wert thou not cruel—wantonly cruel then? Hell's curses be upon thee—I would have thee live for ever to enjoy them—thou shouldst have an eternity of torment—thou shouldst have an exaggerated sense of life for its better appreciation. Forbearance, indeed! No—I would invent a curse for thee that—and, ha! thou art come in season, at the fit moment, to be my help in imprecation. Come forward—thou hast lips would make an oath tell—and tell to the quick. Come hither, come hither, my Constance!"

And I dragged forward the young and terrified wife, who had just then made her appearance in the dungeon, and, forcing her upon her knees before him, I stood over her, like some fierce demon, waving the gleaming dagger in her eyes.

"Thou shalt kneel, Constance! it is a solemn moment, and thou hast that to perform which re-

quires that thy word and action should well suit its solemnity. Ay, fold thy hands upon thy breast—yet I ask thee not to pray—thou must curse, and not pray. Speak, then, as I tell thee—speak, and palter with me not, for, doomed as I am to death and hopeless of escape, as I have nothing now to hope, I have nothing now to apprehend from man. Speak after me, then, as thou hast a love for life—as thou hast a leading and a lasting terror of a horrible death!"

Agonized with the situation of Constance, Harding advanced to interfere, but, with a giant-like strength, I hurled him back with a single arm, and threatened, if he again approached, to bury the weapon in the bosom of the kneeling and terror-stricken woman. On a sudden she recovered her energies, and, in coherent, but feeble tones, she called upon me to proceed.

"It is well thou art thus docile. Thou art wise, Constance—thou art obedient, as thou hast ever been. Keep thy hands folded, and speak after me—say, in thy wonted manner to thy God—bid him hearken to thy prayer—bid him, in tenderness and love for thee, to grant it as thou makest it. Promise him largely of thy increased love and obedience for this. Promise him thy exclusive devotion—say thou wilt live only for him, and strive to forget

all the other attractions, whatever they may be, of life and society. I care not if thou keepest these pledges—it is enough for me that thou makest them."

She did as she was required. She implored the Father fervently to sanction the prayer she was about to make—she vowed her whole love and duty in return, so far as her poor capacities would permit, entirely to him. She spoke in the fulness of accumulated feelings, and with a devotion as deep and touching, as it was tearless and dignified.

"Well—that is enough. Thou hast been as liberal in promises as I could well desire thee; and now for the prayer and petition thou hast to offer. Look on this man, Constance—the murderer of thy husband—the wretch who, wouldst thou believe it, my Constance, has the audacity to have a love even for thee, in his cruel heart—the wretch whom —thou wilt be slow to think so, my Constance, but it is nevertheless true—whom thou dost love—"

She looked up to me, as I proceeded, with a most imploring expression, but I had no touch of pity in my soul at that moment.

"It is true, and you dare not deny it, my Constance. You love the wretch who has murdered your husband; and, perhaps, when my bloody grave,

which his hands have dug, has been well covered over, you will take shelter in his bosom—"

The wretched woman shrieked in agony, and fell at length upon the floor—but I allowed her no respite. It was now my triumph. After a few moments, making her resume her position upon her knees, I continued—

"Him thou must curse! Say after me—God of heaven and earth—if thou be, as thou art said to be, just in thy provisions—Say on!"

She repeated. I went on—

"If the power be in thee, as I believe, to do the will of thy creatures on earth—"

She repeated.

"If thou canst curse and bless—build up and destroy—yield pleasure or pain—make happy or miserable—"

She repeated.

"I call upon thee, with thy agents and ministering powers, to curse with thy eternal wrath—to blister with thy unceasing severities—to torture with thy utmost varieties of pain—to make sore the body—to make bitter the life—to make wretched the spirit—to pursue, at all seasons and in all lands, with thy unceasing and most aggravated asperities, this bloody man—the destroyer of my husband."

The youth upon whom this imprecation was to fall, rushed forward—

"Speak it not! oh, speak it not, lady! in charity speak it not! I can bear with the curse from his lips—from any lips—but thine. Sanction not, I pray you, this wantonness of cruelty; pardon rather, and forgive me, that I have been the unwilling, and, at all times, the sad instrument of Providence in this proceeding."

"Back, back, William Harding! the curse must be uttered—it must be felt—it must be borne. Speak on, Constance Faber, speak on—as I have told it thee."

She looked up in my face with the calm resignation of a saint, and, as one entering upon the pilgrimage of martyrdom, she proceeded regularly in the formula, sentence after sentence, which I had prescribed; while, standing above, I muttered my gratification as every added word seemed to arouse new agonies in the bosom of the denounced. But, as she reached the part assigned to the application of the curse, she changed entirely the character of her prayer, and entreated these curses upon the head of Constance Faber, if she should ever teach her lips to invoke other than blessings upon any being of the human family, whatever, in the sight of heaven or of earth, his offence might be! The

glare from my eyes must have been that of the hyena robbed of his prey; could a look have blasted, she had been slain. A malignant shriek burst from my lips, as, with uplifted arm and furious stroke, I aimed the weapon at her bosom. Harding sprang forward, but the dagger, as she swooned away from the stroke, had penetrated her side. The youth, with unlooked-for power, tore her from my grasp before my blow could be repeated, and bore her out of my reach to the opposite part of the cell. The keeper and his assistants rushed in upon me. That was the moment of trial; and, as they approached, I shouted my defiance to all their power, and aimed the bloody dagger at my own heart; but, at that moment, the pale spectre of Emily came before me—I felt her breath, like a cold wind, blighting and chilling me to the soul, while her finger, resting upon my hand, scorched it as if with all the accumulated fires of damnation. The fates paralyzed me at that instant. I was a coward! I shrank back from my own blow, and the dagger fell from my uplifted, but nerveless hands. They rushed upon me—they bound me down to the floor of my dungeon. I had no more strength—an infant might have fastened the shackles upon me, so completely had fate secured its victim. The dreadful spectre had

departed, and, when too late, recollecting how ably my will heretofore had controlled its presence, I howled, in the silence of my cell, over the unperforming weakness of my hand. That hand had doubly failed me, for Constance yet lived—she was but slightly wounded. I, too, survived—still survived to all the horrors of death, and of such a doom as that before me

CHAPTER XX.

The hour is come, and that mournful ghost again before me. She points me to the scaffo which rises dreadfully up before the barred window of my dungeon. They come—the stern guard, and the loathsome executioner. Oh, cursed weakness, that my own hand should fail me in that moment of release—of relief—that I should be unmanned at the very moment when I should most have been the man. But the fates had written it—I must fulfil my destiny. My eyes grow dim—I fail to see any longer the crowd—all is confused and terrible. What spectres are these that surround me? It is Emily—and why does the old father shake his palsied hand in my face—will no one keep off the intruders? they have no concern here. I have raved—but now all is before me. What a multitude—does this suffering of a fellow-creature give them pleasure? Should I ask—I who have lived in that enjoyment? Would I had also been weak, I should have escaped this exposure—this pain. It is but for a moment, however—but a momentary thrill; and then—fate will have

no secrets. I shall no longer be its blind victim—its slave. Will no one drive that old man from the foot of the scaffold? I would not see him there! It is old Andrews. Would he were gone, or that I could look elsewhere. But no matter—it will soon be over. I would I had a God at this moment—better to have believed—on earth there is nothing for me—such a faith, though folly, had been grateful. But now—now, it is too late. The hour is come! The choking, cold hand is about my throat—dark—dark. The sunlight and the skies are gone—gone—gone—gone.

THE END.

TALES AND SKETCHES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE little things call for brief notice. They are the production of very youthful years, and will be found to indicate some of the warmth of a mind and habit sometimes careless of restraint, and, possibly, not always to be restrained by decorum. Written in the wild exuberance of boyhood, the want of method will perhaps offend the severe mental disciplinarian. In most of them the fancy has been permitted a capricious play, and a taste purely oriental has here and there originated a form of combination and expression in the characters and compound, which the reader of Spitzbergen-like temperament may hold as a madness beyond that of Hamlet or Mercutio, wanting utterly in the method of the one and the pleasant malice of the other. For such persons these papers have certainly not been written. Let them not, therefore, distress themselves by their perusal. It is only with the gentle and the glad—with those who, while the winter fire blazes brightly, feel the heart glow

in sympathy with the pleasant circle that surrounds it—that these passages will meet with toleration: it is only with those who are at times sufficiently rational to exclaim with the cheerful Grecian—

"I will—I will be mad to-night!"

that the Teutonic extravagance of many of these sketches will find countenance and sympathy. The standards of good criticism require that the reader should glow with the same element which inspires the writer; and it will not do, in his passage up the Hartz, on the Walpurgis night, to pluck Goëthe by the sleeve, and gravely say that the reign of faery has gone by. The witch-beverage must be quaffed by the reader, or he will never catch a solitary glimmer of the magic show.

I may reasonably require that he who reads shall have first anointed his eyes with the glamour which has enabled me to see so much. He must become one of us, or he is lost; and I may tell him, before he begins, that my mood inclines prodigiously to *diablerie;* and with a faculty which, if not dangerous, is at least troublesome, at times, it conjures spirits from the vasty deeps of my imagination whenever I please to call them up. I can have an assortment of them at hand for my pleasure; and,

though not over-pleasant as companions, nor over-obedient as servants, I find them sufficiently docile for all temporary purposes. I have my sprightly elves, dancing for me of a summer night—my fairies of the evening on the pleasant hill-side—and sometimes, when the bell tolls at midnight, I turn suddenly in my elbow-chair to behold a very dapper-looking sort of Mephistophiles peeping over my left shoulder. Of course, I wish not to be understood to say that I behold these images with a literal and *bonâ fide* vision. God forbid. I only mean to give an idea of those gleams that occasionally visit the half-shut eye at that peculiar moment which is sometimes permitted to most men, when, without losing any of our individual and personal identity, we have a sort of dim consciousness of another state of existence, and of having other company than that to which we are usually accustomed. This condition of mental excitation, I am not unwilling to admit, may be exaggerated by a coal fire, a bottle of London porter, and the silence —the whispering silence—of the midnight hour, in your old library in the northeast corner.

There is something delightful to me in a mood of this description. I may safely say that, bating some solitary moments, my greatest pleasures have

come to me at such a period, and while under such an influence. I know not how it is with other men. They answer for themselves. I would not pretend nor require that my habits, phrensies, or whatsoever they merit to be called, shall go for a moment in illustration of theirs. But with me, what I say I not only religiously and seriously say, but I most seriously and religiously believe. To me, that state of dreamy existence, which is aptly and beautifully designated by the poet as that of the "half-shut eye," is full of delights and delightful images. The soul rises in due and natural elevation with the exclusion of the world, and he who but just before was "of the earth, earthy," on a sudden realizes a glimpse of his own heritage of immortality. The promised land spreads away beautifully before him, and, from the pleasant Pisgah of his imagination, he beholds the green fields, the quiet waters, and the lovely forms which invite him home—home to the land of hope and of the heart, where a pure fancy fulfils all her promises.

My arm-chair is, of itself, highly inspiriting. It no doubt contributes wonderfully to that state of general preparedness which adds to the force of any invocation. It is of the true oriental make. The reader will not suppose me luxurious when I

describe it. It is of mahogany—of a most solid structure. The legs are capacious, and, like the seat, calculated for the contingency of any burden. Falstaff would not have filled, though he might have fitted it. A soft velvet flowered cushion of purple inclines greatly to the sense of repose which the whole fabric is calculated to instil into him who makes use of it. The arms are rendered inviting by the use of a like material, and the back receives any impression. Five degrees of the circle, thrown under the feet, give, with the slightest effort, an undulatory motion to the whole, which contributes, like an orthodox sermon, to a slumberous quietude, which, of a long summer afternoon, is wonderfully pleasant and becoming.

As evening wears, propped up in this "not-at-home," I laugh at the weather without, eschew visiters within, place my feet on the fender, and survey the panorama of creation through the crackling and half-burnt embers of an excellent coal fire. Numberless are the images—various the pictures—wide the prospects—glorious the views—and delightful the companions, that rise to my view in that survey. I never use the poker;—it is a horrible—an ungraceful engine—and destroys many a pleasant illusion. Coal after coal sinks from sight

—others take their places, forming newer combinations; and, as in a kaleidoscope, presenting infinite varieties of well-adjointed and corresponding objects and associations. If I behold in one huge mass of the black pile, just smitten by the flame, a gloomy and turreted castle, manned with men in armour and ready for the fight—in another, I perceive beneath its walls a hostile and invading array getting ready for the onset. The occasional hiss of the escaping air answers all the purposes of a trumpet; and, as the masses respectively flame and fall, I behold the overthrow of this or that armament—the invading or invaded. This, everybody will admit, is a very pleasant mode of passing away those hours which, with most men, go unemployed. But this is not all. As I have already said, the world of spirits contributes also to my accommodation; and, at such a period, fancy becomes a sort of recruiting-officer, and my senses are all severally supplied with what they respectively require. Images from the natural and spiritual world, alike, await my bidding; and, without describing a circle, filling it with sculls and scorpions, making a contract with my blood in a manner most horribly German, and invoking his arch majesty the devil, I command the creatures of the four elements, and

they come when, and sometimes before, I call for them. The subtile Zephyr, the gloomy Gnome, the skipping Hamadryad, the grinning Satyr, and the dewy and plaintive Naiad, all throng about me, and manifold are the adventures which I glean from their several recitals. They make me the depositary of their secrets and mysteries; but, as they have, no doubt, told the same secrets to thousands beside, I shall perhaps do them but little injury, and betray a confidence without value, as it is so much divided, by occasionally whispering to others what they sometimes whisper to me. As I have made no contracts with the creatures, I am not much concerned about offending them; and, if they play me no pranks in midsummer by moonlight, I shall not fear other inconveniences at their hands.

Will the reader adopt my mood? If he will, there can be no difference between us. He will then forgive these pranks of fancy and of boyhood —perhaps he may also desire to enjoy them. They were mine, they most probably have been his, and it is certain that, until science takes all the charm from the natural world, the vagueness from tradition, and the spiritual from fancy, they will minister, in like manner, to thousands yet to come. To me, these little sketches, memorials of boyish days

and erring fancies, assume a new interest in my eyes as I now look over them. They are venerable from time, and endeared by memory. They come back to me now like some once favourite child who has been missing for many years.

SWEET WILLIAM,

A TALE OF FAERIE.

"There be spirits that do lurk,
Where the yellow bees do work;
In the wild grass, in the flow'rs,
Now in sunshine, now in show'rs,
Ever in some sportive play,
They do while the hours away—
Would your eyes their follies see,
And their pleasures?—come with me."

I.

I HAD been to the *soirée* of Isabel Beaumont—young Isabel, as her neighbours called her—sweet Isabel, as she truly deserved to be called. I had spent an evening most pleasantly; and, though not extravagantly impressed with the many blooms and beauties scattered around me, I was not so much of the stoic as to reject entirely the influence of their sweet and various associations. Besides, I had been caressed and flattered. Isabel, herself a wit and poetess, had freely bestowed her eulogies

upon my own poor efforts in verse; and, though affecting a stubborn indifference to all the honours of popular renown, I could not altogether resist the gratification which its applause, coming through the medium of such sweet lips, necessarily brought along with it.

"Why do you not come oftener?" she inquired, as she rebuked me for my past inattention; "why shut yourself up in that dim bachelor abode with your brother sinners, denying yourselves the sunshine, as well of nature as of society; plotting, no doubt, as much against the state as against its female sovereignty? Are you really so insensible as you pretend? Must we in truth be taught the mortifying consciousness, that charms such as ours can do nothing towards making you more civilized—more human? Be assured, unless you show signs, and those shortly, of a better disposition, in sheer pique and mortification I shall quarter myself upon you. I shall penetrate your innermost sanctuary—break the mystical silence of your dim abode with all the various real and imagined terrors which the proverb has ascribed to the woman voice; making your ears ring with a peal to which they have not as yet become accustomed, and which, I flatter myself, like other se-

vere specifics, warrantable only in cases the most desperate and hopeless, will go very far either to cure or—kill you."

She shook her fan threateningly as she spoke; and, trembling with apprehension lest she should, at some future period, and under the impulse of some one of those whims which have a large influence at all times upon the female understanding, and sometimes made away even with hers, actually do as she had threatened—I made large promises of future amendment. I even went so far as to utter my satisfaction with the terms and tenour of the proposed visitation; but I need not say to the reader with how little sincerity. Three quiet bachelors as we were—so unfamiliar to all noise and bustle—so unwilling to be crowded—so unprepared for such an intrusion—what an awful event was this for contemplation! and how could the members of our college survive the shock and terrors of such an infliction! The quiet deities of our worship, effectually frightened away by the unwonted din which such a creature would bring along with her, would never look behind them in their departure, and surely never contemplate a return; and all the repose and security, to which we had so completely given ourselves up, would be

lost for evermore in the advent of that terrible power, which, though clothed in petticoats, is any thing but petty. The subject was quite too painful for contemplation, and I did not linger long after this dialogue. All my spirits, animal and mental, had taken their departure, and I felt the necessity of at once going after them. I found myself momently growing more and more sick and stupid; and, as the arrangements of the party were in rapid progress towards a country dance, without beat of drum I sidled along by the noisy array, and found the stairway pleasantly contiguous. Be assured I paused not to number the steps. I hurried home as quickly as possible, and marvellous long was the breath which I drew on entering once more in safety the sacred walls of our symposium.

II.

Such had been the hurry in which my exit had been taken, that I had altogether forgotten to cast from me, on leaving the abode in which I had suffered so much peril, a fine, full rosebud, one of the first of the season, given me at the commencement of the evening by the fair hostess, with a grace and sweetness of manner which were irresistible.

I had, at the time, placed it, with an air of the most tragic description, in the folds of my vest, from whence, with a most lackadaisical expression, it peered forth upon the company. With my veteran habits and grave temper, such a foppery was not only unbecoming, but particularly ungracious in my own sight; and I gave into it merely to avoid reproof for that ruggedness of demeanour which the vulgar are always too apt to couple with the pursuits and temper of philosophy. Had I not been so thoroughly troubled and terrified with the threat which had driven me home, the *outré* appearance of such an ornament would not, as may well be supposed, have been suffered so long to distinguish the garb of one to whom it could yield so little satisfaction.

I hurried into the garden immediately on my return. I felt too much inquietude to take my usual seat in the sanctum, and had no wish for supper, in the discussion of which I saw that my two companions were already lustily engaged. I threw myself upon a bench that lay half buried in the long grass of our arbour, and gave myself up to meditation. While speculating upon the subjects suggested by the manner in which my evening had been passed, I unconsciously took the flower from

my bosom, and proceeded to pull it to pieces. It was a beautiful bud, of the largest size, swollen almost to bursting, and promising in a few hours to unfold itself and all its sweetness to the desiring sense. At another moment, and in another mood, I should not have destroyed it—I should have regarded the act as inhuman. But now I was fairly roused and ruffled; and, with a malicious delight mingled pretty evenly with an abstract wandering of my thought, I beheld leaf by leaf torn away rudely from the purple mansion of its birth, and crumpled cruelly under my unhesitating fingers. As I thus toiled, I mused and murmured.

"Yes, her tongue would make a fine abode for the student—we should never hear the end of it—there would 'be no sleep for all *our* house,' any more than for that of Dunsinane. The same cry might fill our ears as filled those of Macbeth. She would not only murder sleep, but one would not be permitted a snore beyond one's breath—she would murder silence too."

And, as I soliloquized, sentence by sentence, the rose, leaf by leaf, was undergoing demolition, until but the last circlet, the innermost fold of the poor flower, was all that survived, in mournful attestation as well of its own beauty as of the misplaced gen-

erosity of Isabel Beaumont. I paused as my fingers approached this last recess. I shuddered at my own barbarity. I could not avoid the thought which rebuked me for thus wantonly destroying that which gave so much, though perhaps momentary, gratification, and was, at the same time, intrinsically, so sweet and beautiful. How many senses, much more deserving than my own, had I not deprived and defrauded of their proper solace? What life had I not wronged of its true subsistence? Though, possibly, not constituted myself to find luxury or delight in a source so humble, were there not thousands to whom the bud which I had destroyed and trampled would have been both cheering and charming? Would not the waning life of the consumptive have gathered something from its fine odour and delicate teints well adapted to gladden senses attenuated to kindred and like delicacy? I shuddered at my thoughtless brutality, and was about to restore the remnant of the dismembered flower to my bosom, when a faint sigh rose from the still unbroken petals which audibly commanded my attention. I paused and listened. In a few seconds something resembling human tones and familiar language struck upon my senses, and I bent down to listen. They had not

deceived me; for, after a slight interval, a voice again syllabled forth, from the bosom of the flower, sounds which, though confused and broken, I was yet enabled to understand. What did this mean? I was almost tempted to dash the mysterious blossom to my feet; when the prisoner, for such he was, as if comprehending my emotion and design, appealed to me in terms of energy and feeling; calling upon me, in language of the utmost earnestness, to conclude the labour I had begun, and, by destroying his dungeon, release him from his captivity.

III.

I DID as he desired. I tore away the few leaves that still adhered to the stem, and then for the first time discovered the cause of that great size which had made it remarkable. A tiny and glittering form, with shape like our own, but of dimensions the most diminutive, rose from the recumbent and contracted position which the tightly-drawn leaves had forced upon it. It was slender and graceful—symmetrically perfect in every feature; and, with a face whose expression, though delineated in a compass the most pigmy and insignificant, was

that of winning yet manly beauty. Its dress seemed that of the first and freshest leaves of the early summer, the green of which was curiously and gorgeously sprinkled with hues of gold, of saffron, and purple, inwrought and intermingled with the main texture. Golden wings depended from its shoulders, the seams of whose plumes were of the richest raven black, while the down of their extremities was of the most brilliant yet delicate crimson. It was altogether a being of light and loveliness. I gazed with wonder coupled with unqualified delight, and for a while had no words to express either my astonishment or curiosity. The little creature, in the meanwhile, as if desiring more perfectly to comprehend his freedom, leaped gracefully into the air, making a dozen circuits with a whirling rapidity indicative of his rapture; then suddenly, with an expression of the utmost confidence, stooping at last, he perched himself upon a clump of boxwood that grew beside me.

"And who, and what, are you?" was my inquiry upon his return.

"Who?—I? I am a fairy—a prince among the fairies. My name is Sweet William. You mortals have a beautiful flower which you call after me."

"Wonderful! And how came you here—where do you live—where are your people? Tell me your story—tell me all about you—and, first, how came you in prison?"

"You shall hear; but, before I begin, let me thank you for the prompt and friendly manner in which you released me from my dungeon; but never pull a flower to pieces so roughly again. I was in terror lest you should take off one of my wings, which had never been so much jeoparded before. As it is, I have sustained divers rents and bruises, which will call for care and a leech."

"Well, well!" I exclaimed, somewhat impatiently, "I'm sorry I hurt you; but to your story. I am anxious to know the history of your concerns. I am curious to know all about you."

IV.

He did not wait for much pressing, but at once began as follows:—

"Know, then, that I belong to, and form one of, the Spring-tribe of fairies—a tribe which enjoys its existence more perfectly at this than at any other season. Indeed, we know no other. We follow the season in its round through the different

countries of the globe; and, though we should not perish, yet we should suffer greatly were we to be left in the enjoyment of another period, for the influence and effects of which our habits have not prepared us. Thus, for example, we dwell with you in April and May, and, as the season becomes oppressive, we fly to a region less advanced. It is thus we live; and in this way, in the course of the year, we have the entire possession of the globe. I am one of the heirs to the chief rule of our tribe; and, but for my misfortunes and the injustice I have met with, would be, even now, upon the sunflower throne of my ancestors. But adverse fate and fortune with us and ours, as with you and your people, have had their way; and, instead of being a prince in authority, with an entire nation in obedience at my feet, my legitimate sway has been usurped and appropriated by another—my sister has been forced to become the wife of the usurper, in this way to afford some countenance to his usurpation; and, defeated in an effort to restrain these objects, I have been placed in the custody from which you have just effected my release."

"And who is this usurper, and by what agency did he obtain so great an influence with your peo-

ple as to bring about such a revolution?" was my immediate inquiry.

"His name is John Quill, or, rather, that was the only name by which our people knew him. He was an obscure wretch—an author—a paltry fellow, who wrote politics, and history, and criticism, and verses."

"The d—l! and could such a creature effect so much? It is not credible. The pursuit of letters, quite abstract and reserved as it usually is, would seem to forbid any approach to the strifes and turmoils of popular life, particularly at a season of wars and revolutions."

"Why, so it is thought, but I am persuaded incorrectly. Once aroused, and always an irritable and discontented race, I am satisfied that, of all creatures, these poets are the most difficult to manage—the most dangerous to deal with. The only reason, perhaps, why they so unfrequently interfere in the concerns of state and government, is simply because they affect to regard the prizes and honours of popular life as unworthy and beneath the true dignity of their aim. Mere popularity is not enough for those who are perpetually clamouring for, and vociferously asserting, their immortality."

"You may be right; and, indeed, we too have

some authority for your notion in our own experience; but I am anxious to hear your story in detail. Will it please your princeship to go on with it?"

"It is long, and you may find it tedious; but, since you desire it, that is no concern of mine. You pluck for yourself the difficulty, and may not complain of its thorns. Thus, then, as I have already told you, I am the legitimate male heir to the Sunflower empire. My father, whose name I bear, having reached the allotted term of one life on this, was transferred, during the last season, to another planet, and I was left in the peaceable possession of his throne. At the period of his departure I was wandering up the Oronoco, in company with the Star nation, for one of the daughters of which I had imbibed a high admiration. The news was brought me by our old and favourite servant Will-o'-the-wisp, who urged my immediate return. I delayed, however, unfortunately, and in the delay the evil had been done. John Quill, always a moody and somewhat savage thing, who had commenced his life with writing eulogies upon my father, but who, failing thereby to acquire place and pension, had become his most bitter satirist, now appealed to the populace, and made a

faction among the vulgar. He talked of reform and such other things, and, by referring perpetually to the supposed interests of the herd, he did not long want for an attentive auditory. He went about making speeches like the most thorough-paced demagogue. He called my father a bloody tyrant, and me he set down as little, if any, better. All the evils, whether of the laws or of the seasons, were laid to our account respectively. If there came no rains to allay the burning heats of the sands on which we were to dance by night, it was all the doing of one or other of us. If our sunflower crops happened to be limited in productiveness, and our people, in consequence, were compelled to emigrate to other sections of country, we were the guilty, and ours must be the punishment. In short, every thing evil or unfortunate in our affairs was laid at our door, and, however wild the charge, the result you must already have foreseen. You know enough of the nature of a thoughtless and ignorant populace, wrought upon by unanticipated misfortune, to understand how it is that he who proposes a remedy for their real or imagined grievances—however extravagant his suggestions—however dishonourable his motives—can always most readily gather his faction, and will

never want for attentive consideration among them. When I returned home, I was hailed with reproaches, and my reception was blows. Unsuspecting conspiracy or assault, I was made a prisoner, and placed in the dungeon in which you found me, and for my release from which I am solely indebted to yourself. John Quill, assuming to himself the titular distinctions of our family, to which he had not the most solitary pretension, seized upon my sister, and compelled her to marry him. He has seated himself most complacently upon the throne of my father, the golden sunflower of our exclusive inheritance, and sways its sovereignty with a despotism as wild and reckless as were his denunciations of our rule. Our tribe is ground down by a taxation the most villanous and partial. My father's and my own friends are the victims of his wanton injustice. Their property, if they dare complain, is wrested from them on the slightest pretences, and appropriated to the use of his creatures. Nothing, indeed, can exceed the gloom and misery which now overhang our unhappy nation. Nor, so far as I can see, is there any apparent remedy—at least, not for the present. The usurper has surrounded himself with his guards and mercenaries—he has bestowed upon them all the

materials of warfare and all the wealth of the country, and, by their means, he contrives to keep in subjection the large body of my own and father's friends who might be disposed to declare in my behalf; while the fruits of their industry are torn from them for the pay and reward of those who are thus employed in their coercion."

V.

When he came to a pause, which he at length did, I proceeded more closely to examine him; for I suspected, and could not altogether divest myself of the fear of, imposition.

"This is indeed a horrible state of things; but why, let me ask, do the sufferers not unite in the common cause for resistance to this tyranny?"

"They would do so if they could at less disadvantage. The usurper is in power, and has all its advantages at command. He holds the purse and controls the armory of the nation. The idle, the dissolute, and desperate, considerable in number, are the merest mercenaries in his employ. A revolution would be rash, and almost hopeless, under circumstances such as these."

"But did your friends and party make no effort

for you at the outset? Did they suffer you quietly to be put down?"

"No; they did what they could; but, taken by surprise, and imperfectly prepared for conflict, they made head in vain. They were defeated in a pitched battle with considerable loss; and, once dispersed, and without a leader to direct, they have not had the spirit to reassemble for another conflict. Now that I am free, though, as I have reason to think, surrounded by the spies of the usurper, I shall proceed to organize and rally them, as well for the recovery of their rights as of my own."

"Well, what you have said surprises me greatly. I had always been taught to believe that you fairies were the most sportive, pleasant, and happy of all God's creatures: that there was nothing of strife, or sadness, or suffering among you; that you lived only among sweets, and sunbeams, and zephyrs, with a life as purely sinless as theirs, and knew nothing savouring of malevolence which was not, at least, playfully, and not injuriously, so. I grieve to hear that passions, and a pride like ours, disfigure your lives and blot up your enjoyments."

"This has been the notion of your poets, but they knew little in truth about us, and their fancies did not go very far in their better education. We

have our wars, for have we not our women? we have our hates, for we also have our loves; we have our fears, for we are not without our hopes; we have our jealousies, for we are not less ambitious of place, power, and glory, than yourselves. Judge, then, for yourself, in how much, possessing such characteristics, we should hope for escape from the trials and troubles of your humanity."

"There is one matter on which I should like to be informed. How is it that, in the possession of spiritual and other agencies superior to ours, it should be permitted me to release you from a captivity imposed upon you by one of your own species?"

"Did you not assume for our condition a destiny far more grateful and elevated than it really is, you might, without difficulty, answer your own inquiry. Superior though we may be in many things to you, the Creator of our common tribes, with that equal eye which is the prominent feature in our ideas of the eternal justice, has found it necessary to restrain our pride and power, as well as yours, by denying many attributes to the one in common with the other. With this reason a mortal is sometimes permitted the performance of an act which a fairy may not think of—and in this way we live as mu-

tual restraints upon one another. Do you not perceive that, without some such arrangement of the over-ruling Providence, your race would be entirely at the mercy of ours? At our caprice, were it not so, you would perish. As it is, we may, and do, annoy and torment you in a thousand ways, though your philosophers have traced your annoyances to any other than the true cause. It is well for both of us that we are under the same equal protection from one another—there being cases of exception, only, in which nations, differing so decidedly from, and in some respects so adverse to, one another, may mingle together, and furnish, in a few instances, some mutual checks and impediments to the progress or the desires of each other. It is thus that a fairy, inthralled by a fairy, may be so spelled in his prison that fairy power may not effect his release. My place of confinement on this occasion happened to be one which, by our nature, we are not permitted to destroy. The rose is sacred in our estimation, and is utterly beyond our power. For this reason it was chosen as my prison by my cunning enemy. The fairy who destroys a rose descends from his grade, and on some obscurer planet passes into a lower condition of life."

"I understand—but, let me ask, if your enemy

had been malignantly disposed towards you, why did he not destroy you? Why did he place you in a prison from which the chances of escape were so numerous?"

"You mistake again. His malignity was certainly not less than I now describe it. He would have destroyed me had he well dared to do so. But it would have been a doubtful policy to have done so, since, even with his own faction, there are some with whom the blood of legitimacy is still, to a certain degree, considered sacred. There might have been a great reaction in my favour—and he feared it—in the event of an open attempt upon my life. He chose a mode, however, less fruitful in peril, but almost as certain to bring about my destruction as the most direct design. He knew how much the fortunes of the flower were under the control of mortals, and relied upon the strong probability of my being torn in pieces or crushed under feet as soon as the little perfume of my prison-house had been exhausted. Such, most probably, would have been my fortune, had it not suited your mood to articulate a long soliloquy as, leaf by leaf, with measured determination, you tore away the walls of my dungeon; nor, as it is, have I en-

tirely escaped. You see by the rents in my wings how much I have suffered in the mode of my release."

VI.

I WAS about to condole with the little prince on his misfortunes, and to offer my assistance, such as it was, in his cause, when, all of a sudden, his countenance exhibited the strongest signs of mental agitation. His eyes were turned scrutinizingly and quickly in all directions of the garden, and, without a word, leaping to the rose-bush which stood near, he tore away several of the largest thorns, and took an attitude and put on an air of the most manly defiance.

"As I feared," said he, "my enemies are upon me. The spies of the usurper have apprized him of my escape from prison, and the whole garden is surrounded by his myrmidons."

I looked as he spoke, and, to my great surprise, beheld a numerous array, armed with long spears of pointed cane, bows of yew, blow-guns of willow, and arrows fitted to them of the most pointed thorns of the forest. They approached the young prince, who stood firmly the assault. At their

head came one whose fierce gesture and manner of authority at once, in my mind, determined him to be the usurper, John Quill, himself. I was right. Despising all humbler enemies, the dethroned prince, without waiting for the assault, and with a rashness only commendable in the desperateness of his situation, rushed fearlessly upon him, and challenged a single combat. But he was not so to be encountered. The whole force of the foe hemmed him round and pressed in upon him—they girt him in with their weapons—he, struggling and raging gallantly, striking down an enemy at every blow, and resolutely rushing upon, and aiming at, their chief. But valour and skill were nothing to the odds against him. He fought in vain. He was overthrown. I saw him borne to the earth—his foemen upon him—a thousand spears were at his breast, and I could bear the sight no longer. I seized a weapon—I dashed forward into the array—I aimed my blows right and left, on all sides. Already had I stricken the heads from a couple, the most forward of the enemy—my next blow, and John Quill himself must have perished, for my weapon was uplifted and hung over him without the most distant probability of his escape with life; when, suddenly, my arms were pinioned by a supe-

rior power—the weapon was wrested from my grasp—and, in the twinkling of an eye, I found myself overthrown and struggling for release upon the soft carpet of our sanctuary.

"Why do you hold me back?" I exclaimed to my two brother bachelors of the symposium, whom I now found to be the powers which had so inopportunely arrested the stroke of justice upon the head of the tyrant.

"Why, what's the matter? would you break every thing in the house in your sleep?" was the reply.

I remonstrated with them in vain. "Will you, then," I asked, "leave the young Prince, Sweet William, to perish? Will you permit that tyrannical usurper, John Quill, to destroy him?" and, as I spoke, I again advanced to the contiguous garden which I had just before left, in order to procure the sabre which I had handled so lustily, and which I now endeavoured to regain; but they interfered and prevented me. Laughing in my face, they pointed to the two victims I had overthrown. Alas! they seemed no longer the emissaries of the tyrant. They were our two decanters of sherry, from which the heads had been most adroitly stricken, and through the rents of which the goodly liquor

was now streaming over the floor. The demijohn, well stored with the same precious juice, which, to my bewildered eyes, had personified the usurping Quill, had been only preserved from a like fate by the timely interposition of my comrades.

"What have you seen—what have you dreamed?" said they, in a breath. I was dumb. It was true, the fairies were no longer before me, but I had certainly been under the power of the *incubi*. I could not bear the jest and laughter which assailed me on all hands, and, strangely wondering at the hallucination which had so wrought upon my senses, I went hurriedly, yet full of meditation, to my chamber.

VII.

I RETIRED soon after to my couch, but I could not sleep. My mind was disturbed vaguely. I looked and listened. The night waned and darkened, and still I watched; fevered with the whispering silence, I heard not even the bark of a dog in the streets, and the tick of the clock was the only audible but most unpleasant sound that came for hours to my senses. But my adventure with the fairies was not destined to meet with a termination

so abrupt; for, about one in the morning, I could plainly distinguish something like a humming but suppressed whisper, as of many voices confusedly but cautiously employed in a dispute, which seemed to arise at the extreme corner of the chamber in which I lay. Then, my eye was attracted to a small glimmering which flashed out at intervals, I had almost said, and certainly thought at the time, from the top of my spermaceti candle, which stood centrally upon the mantel. From the emission of light, however, at periods, marked by the usual unsteadiness of its pale and delicate sparkle, I judged, and judged rightly, after a moment's reflection, that the gleam was that of a glow-worm, which, by some means or other, had begun

"To pale its ineffectual fires,"

in the place of the more certain aid of my candle; illuminating its own little sphere with a splendour which, though it could afford but little aid to my observation at any other time, served fully, on this occasion, to give me a perfect insight into the matters then going on. Through its medium I could distinctly see that I was not, as I had been at retiring, the sole occupant of my chamber; but that hundreds of little creatures, formed like human be-

ings, though on a scale of the most diminutive insignificance, were busily employed in a variety of offices within its precincts, making every thing around them their own, and behaving with as much familiarity and freedom within the four walls as if they were the owners and proprietors. Their tiny forms, clothed in gay green vestments, were tinged and tinctured here and there with spots of the richest gold and crimson, while the light and gossamer wings, which depended with an air of the most perfect spirituality from their shoulders, approved them to be of those gay creatures of the element,

> "That in the colours of the rainbow live,
> And play i' the plighted clouds."

Gradually the whole scene became developed to my survey, and I could perceive that they were employed in some great procession, at once of attraction and solemnity. They formed a double circle, and performed a variety of fantastic evolutions, which might be dances, for aught I knew of their habits and indulgences—chanting all the while, in a low but highly musical accent, the following song, which, to my ear, savoured of a most pleasing melancholy :—

1.

Come in thy robes of quiet Night,
With each attending spell around,
And let the wanton zephyr's flight,
Be pinioned to our fairy ground;
The stars shall bring each gracious light,
And music in the reeds shall sound.

2.

Think'st thou that earth, alone for thee,
Poor, jealous mortal, Heaven has made—
Thou hast its rule, and so have we,
With both our wills alike obeyed—
Your sovereign sway by day you see,
For us hath night her charms array'd:—

3.

Her maiden charms of stainless sky,
And odour'd breath, and wooing air,
And many a countless luxury,
Denied to bless your humbler sphere—
Sweet spirits, too, when moons are high,
Descend from heaven to revel here.

4.

Take thou the day, but to us leave
The gentle hours of evening, still—
Your sterner spirits may not heave,
At wanton beam or rippling rill—
Yet, for each flower that dies, we grieve,
And dread its fate and mourn its ill.

Was this song intended for my ear? I thought so, and did not think it improper, however imprudent it might be, to look and listen. They did not dance long, but, dividing themselves into two nearly equal bodies, they assembled directly in front, but at a small distance from, each other, drawn up

in battle array, and seemingly for the purposes of war. Some were armed with the thorns of the orange-tree and rosebush, while the more common instruments of warfare seemed to be the scented flowers of the one and the buds and blossoms of the other. A solitary cricket, who sounded his little bugle at intervals, had been impressed into the service as a trumpeter by the one side; while a parcel of cherry-stones, enclosed within the outer rind of the walnut, answered the purposes of the drum for the other, being rattled by a dwarfish but pursy little member of their own lilliputian tribe. Thus prepared and directed, they approached each other with a degree of fury more characteristic of the fierce combat and more determined affray; and the conflict was waged with a degree of ardour more like a battle for life and death, than one of mere sport or courtesy.

VIII.

Various were the results of the strife. Here a feeble warrior, overpowered with innumerable rosebuds, concentrating at the same moment upon his person, would sink down on the field; and the fight would be renewed with aggravated fury above his

body, as well with the view of securing it from captivity by the one side, as of bearing it away as a trophy by the other. If the one party was successful, the unfortunate combatant was borne from the field on a litter, woven together of vines and leaves; and on the other, if the enemy proved triumphant, chains made of blossoms of the pride of India were put upon his hands, his wings were sprinkled with dews, and sometimes clipped, and he was borne away to a dungeon made of a huge calabash, the entrance to which was barred with spokes of cane and cedar. For a long time the battle was continued without any apparent advantage on either side. New fairies were perpetually arriving, joining themselves to one or the other party, and by this means protracting the combat, which, among those originally engaged, would otherwise have been settled more readily. Mingled as they were, by this time, together—having lost all the original ardour in which they had begun, the fight had at length settled down into an affair of individuals, terminating, finally, in so many single combats, which seemed to be waged with a more particular fury than before. The feeling grew personal and less general. Passions became concentrated and at work, and the combatants chose for their en-

counter those against whom they appeared to entertain some especial enmity. I could plainly see that there were several of this description on foot. Such innocuous weapons as rosebuds and orange-blossoms were soon made to give way to the more formidable ones. Pointed spears of cane, or sharp thorns of various kinds, were now used; and some were armed with lath whips or bludgeons, with which they sought as well to disfigure as to maim their opponents. Among these combats my eye singled out one of a nature purely personal. The parties seemed to entertain for each other a more than common degree of hatred and dislike. The utmost malignity shot out from their eyes, and was distinguishable in their actions; and, disregarding the rest of the combat, and all the scene beside, saving and excepting the portions in which they were necessarily engaged, they seemed to recognise no other object than their mutual destruction. Nor did this fury and singleness of purpose appear only to operate upon and to affect the two. Whether it was that there was a feud existing between them, known to their nation, and which, like those of the Indians, had to be fought out; or whether the novelty of their desperate fight threw an air of ridicule and rebuke upon all others less severe, I know not;

but it was evident that, in a little while, they were the sole combatants on the ground, and every interest of a more general nature was suspended in the survey of the sharp controversy which they contrived to carry on.

Nothing could exceed the skill, seemingly, with which they pursued the combat. So far as bodily prowess was concerned, they appeared pretty equally matched; and it was left to their respective knowledge of the *science* to determine the affray. Their skill seemed perfect; and, from the ease which characterized their actual style of fight, it was difficult to guess how, unless some unpropitious circumstance should throw its weight into one or the other scale, it could be decided. The helm, the shield, the curved shoulders, and closed wings, alternately shrunk beneath the severity of their several blows. Yet, though they seemed to stagger the party receiving them, they made no wounds and drew no blood. This might be owing in part to their armour, and partly to the excellence of their guard. Sometimes, suddenly unclosing their silky wings, they would whirl away into the air, to alight only the more unexpectedly before the antagonist, changing the ground, and in hope to take him upon advantage by the surprise. But

their efforts did not seem productive always of the proposed results; for, to speak in just terms of their cunning in the art of fence, if one did exhibit a surprising degree of activity and skill in this sort of flight, the other seemed not the less well prepared to encounter and to foil him. But the parties grew sensibly weaker, more irritable, and less guarded than before; and at length, when I least expected the affair to terminate, or terminate in this way, the larger and more robust of the two, in a moment's inattention, and by a sudden backstroke of his enemy's bludgeon, received a severe blow on the arm, and, with a slight shriek from the excessive pain, let fall his weapon, and stood at the mercy of his opponent. This condition of things now brought the whole array once more to loggerheads; particularly as the more successful champion, following up his advantage, brought his wounded opponent to the ground by a second stroke, even more severe than that which had disarmed him. The fight was just about to recommence, when I thought it high time for other parties to interfere; and recollecting it as an old faith among the vulgar, that water is an effectual barrier against the passage of fay or fairy, I resolutely and somewhat desperately stretched my hands forth from the bed-

side to where stood my wash-stand, and, seizing upon the ewer, which was conveniently filled with water, I took deliberate aim at the two combatants, who stood apart from the rest. At the first hiss of the water one of them took to flight; but the wounded champion, unable to move, was certainly and suddenly soused all over, and a complete stream thrown around him, preventing access from any of his companions. I had no sooner achieved this feat than I was forcibly impressed with all its fearful consequences. There is no class of spirits, "of the earth, earthy," so revengeful, so troublesomely revengeful, according to the faith which recognises their existence, as the fairy. They are renowned for their tricks upon travellers, housekeepers, particularly old maids and bachelors, and spinsters of a certain habit. They tease old coquettes, and worry young ones. They pinch the sleeping wife, newly married, and rouse her and her young lord up more frequently o' the long nights than is altogether consistent with their health and quiet. But why enumerate? Everybody has read that fine fancy of Mercutio—

> "Oh, then, I see, Queen Mab hath been with you:
> She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
> In shape no bigger," &c.

As I expected, the toil and turmoil were now only about to begin. Certain it is, the whole fairy tribe were in the utmost tribulation for the fate of their companion thus taken in the toils. The rival armies forgot all farther contention, and united their forces for his extrication—all but the champion by whom the prisoner had been overthrown. His malignity seemed more unequivocal, since he refused all help to his enemy on this occasion. He paused but a moment to survey the condition of the prisoner, and I thought I could discover something like a grin of delight on his sharp and vindictive features; then taking wing, he passed out of my sight, but in what manner or direction I could not at the time discover.

IX.

THERE was now a tremendous buzzing and shuffling in my chamber—all was doubt and deliberation among the petty people. In their whisperings I thought I could make out, every now and then, the hundred half-formed plans proposed for the liberation of their comrade, all proving ineffectual, however, for they did nothing towards it. Now the chairs would creak and rattle beneath the

weight of half a dozen of them, who endeavoured, in this way, to behold the predicament of their companion, which otherwise, through the dense mass collected around him, they could not have seen. In the meantime, what with his leaguer and his bruises, the captive himself uttered at intervals a low complaining murmur, like the sighing of the winds through some decaying crevice in your shutter—a sad, zephyr-like complaint, the dreamy faintness of which was quite as touching as the grief in which it might be supposed to have its origin. But to their plans for his extrication. First they collected all their roses, and endeavoured to bridge a way for him over the water, by which he might escape without touch or taint from it; but the leaves became saturated with too much rapidity, and the poor gladiator appeared to suffer so greatly from his wounds, that assistance was necessary to bring him out of the difficulty by a force independent of his own. In the effort to pass to him, it was discovered that those making the attempt stood no small chance of incurring a like captivity; the heavy liquid penetrating with its dank influence the silky and gauze-like texture of their wings, and leaving them also at the mercy of the cold and cruel creatures of the earth. It would be impos-

sible for me to describe the many efforts, the indefatigable energy and determined adherence to their purpose, exhibited by the little creatures on this occasion. Unwavering, however, as they were, it was soon discovered that their efforts must be vain, unless the party whom they sought to free could co-operate with their labours. This, from the severity of his injuries, he could not do; and their purpose was not now so much his release as their revenge upon him who was instrumental in placing him in this predicament. I soon perceived, from sundry demonstrations, that my turn was at hand, and I prepared for it accordingly. Unfortunately, in my previous hurry to make my prisoner, I had squandered away more water than was necessary, and had put it entirely out of my power to fence myself in from attack by a wall of it around me, which I might otherwise have done. With some of it in reserve, at least, I might have kept them in salutary check, from the awe which it would have necessarily inspired. But they came to the attack, unobstructed, and in fearful array. A sort of chiming howl, which, though not louder than the chirping of a cricket, excited in me a considerable nervousness, preceded their advance, and led me to many disagreeable anticipations of

what was to come. At length their batteries were fairly opened, and siege commenced in regular form. Heaven only knows, I cannot remember, and certainly would not pretend to describe, the many terrors which they employed for my punishment. At one moment my ears were assailed with the hummings as of ten thousand moschetoes, gaunt wretches, whom the winter had exhausted of blood, and who now came with their accursed bugles and suckers to my veins for their replenishing. Then their fangs, darted resolutely into my cheeks and nose, rendered it imperatively necessary that I should thrust myself entirely beneath the coverlet, and trust to it for protection; but, in covering my head rather too hastily, I left my feet bare, and the invading army only transferred themselves from one extremity to the other. Having secured these members also, by a familiar contraction of the knees, I conceived myself perfectly secure; when, to my utter astonishment and horror, I heard them taking the screws out of my bedstead, one by one, with a fearful rapidity, and found the old posts, originally none of the surest, tottering as well under their additional weight as from my tremours, and promising a speedy dissolution. In the meantime another strong body seized upon the

bedclothes, and by concerted arrangement was drawing them entirely from my person. This was quite too much. I made a desperate effort, leaped out of the bed, and, seizing my clothes, endeavoured to put them on. But here again the mischievous urchins had been at work, and had performed, with singular ingenuity and haste, that peculiar operation upon them which is known among swimmers as a trick practised upon the clothes of those who are in the water by those who are out of it. My linen was in fifty knots, my drawers in no less; and, when I attempted to put on my pantaloons, I discovered the legs filled with stockings, vest, neckcloth, and slippers, in such hostile confusion as to create an awkward question in my mind whether or not I might ever calculate on their extrication. I was at this stage of the conflict, and in this perilous condition, when, all on a sudden, a shriek burst upon my ears, so piercing, yet not loud, so shrill, yet not unmusical, so pleasingly delicate, yet conveying an idea of so much agony, that I felt the blood curdle in my veins, and the hair stood upright and bristling from my cold and clammy temples. I regained my position in bed, and resumed my covering. The enemy had left me, and all farther attack seemed given over.

They had a new object of interest, and of far deeper consideration. The shriek I had heard was from my captive, and they now surrounded him in his death agony. They recognised the peculiar cry of pain and of approaching dissolution; and, by some effort, whether of himself or of theirs, he had been removed from the prison within which I had placed him. Supported on a layer of young leaves, they busied themselves in finding either restoratives or sedatives of some kind, and in their own way, but seemingly in vain; for, with a gentle sigh, that seemed like the faint echo of distant music, he breathed his last in the arms of those immediately attending him. The glow-worm dropped from the place from whence, through all the time, he had directed their revels with his light, and was seen no more; but the faint tramp of their footsteps, as if they were marching in order, and a low strain, that rose at intervals like a dirge upon my ear, told me of the great loss they had suffered, and of the grief that attended even upon the death of a fairy.

X.

Was it possible that I had been dreaming? Could a narrative so methodical—so regularly drawn out to all its proper consequences—so perfectly dramatic—have been the mere fantasy of my wild and wandering senses? I could not even then believe it. The thing was impossible, and, half distracted between doubt and credulity—between faith and skepticism—I rose from my couch, and took my seat at the window which looked directly down upon the garden.

There, all was silent as the grave. The winds had scarce a whisper. The leaves waved not; and the tall trees, with an inclination the most slight and shadowy, barely bent themselves forward beneath the wing of the zephyr that now and then stooped to take shelter within their branches. Above all, the moon shone forth with most incomparable and touching brightness, like some guardian mother, pale with watching, and now keeping a careful eye over her sleeping progeny. The scene throughout was one of faery—of the richest fancy—and it need occasion little wonder when I say that my faith grew strong in my former vision.

All things seemed to contribute to the madness of my mood. All things grew spiritual to the eye, in strict accommodation with the impulses of the mind and heart over which they had wrought so large an influence.

Surely I dream not now, and what means the long procession which I see before me? Once more the garden walk has its throng. The tiny tribes are at work, and busy in the most various circumstance. The flowers live—the trees have exercise—not a bush nor a branch lacks its array—they are all in motion. God of the various world, how wondrous are thy works—how more than wonderful art thou!

They are engaged in the performance of a mournful duty. They bear the body of the unfortunate prince, Sweet William, to the place of sepulture. They form that class of his former subjects who had not altogether deserted him, and who are now permitted by the politic usurper to do the last offices at his burial. Did you ever see a fairy funeral, gentle reader? I would that I could describe it for your sake. The monotonous hum of the horn, blown at regular intervals by the trumpeter-beetle — the mourning candles carried by the glow-worm—the chant of the bee-bird—

the occasional cry of the whippoorwill, keeping time and tune with the sorrowing cavalcade, attest the loss which they have all sustained; for the fairy is well beloved by the innocent populace of his garden regions. He is the protector and patron of bud, bird, and insect—he countenances their sports, shares in their pleasures, and revenges their injuries. Should they not be present at his funeral?

XI.

They bore him to his sepulchre in a green hillock, over which I had often rambled. Little did I dream then of its peculiar uses. They wrapped his lifeless body in the greenest leaves, and laid it with due reverence in the open grave, freshly hollowed out for the purpose by the industrious hill-fox. Then came the chant of the mourners—a melancholy song, reciting the virtues, and deploring the loss, of the deceased. It told of his beauty of form, his gentleness of spirit—how he loved all things that were beautiful, and how all things that were beautiful came to sorrow at his departure. They described him now as the occupant of a brighter and more durable garment of animated materiality—as the dweller in fresher and richer

gardens—the partaker of choicer fruits and flowers —the sharer in more delicious sports—the loved of more lasting affections. Their creed was not unlike our own.

But one lingered by the grave when all had departed. A delicate form—a gentle beauty—the maiden he had loved. She was one of the daughters of another tribe, called the Star nation, and wore its badge in the shape of a brilliant star, now suffused in sorrowful dews, upon her forehead. Her name was Anne-Moné. Long and earnestly did she pour forth her wail over the form of the buried lover. She planted a rose-tree at his head, and turned away at last; broken words upon her lips, and tears streaming from her long eyelashes. She came towards my window. A sudden bound placed her upon a branch of the tall tree which hung directly before it. I felt my head swim and my senses grow confused at her approach. My limbs were paralyzed—my strength was gone—my heart ceased its most perceptible pulsations. She leaned forward, and half sung and half whispered in my ears—what delicious, what melancholy music. She told me the story of her loves—of the misfortunes and the loss of her lover; and avowed her determination to exile herself henceforward

from all her people, until the hour of her own departure to the sphere of him she wept. It was to fly the solicitations of another suiter, whom her friends and family desired to force on her, that she had come to this determination. This much of herself and hers. What she next said concerned me alone. She spoke of my youth—of the wrong I was about to do to my own nature, and in fate's despite, by the isolation which I had been prevailed upon to adopt. Was I happy, or could I be happy, shut in from the associations of that other sex, the communion with which is one of the first conditions that comes with existence? Such was the question, which, asked by her, the widow and the desolate of love, I knew not well how to answer, even had speech at that moment been permitted me. She placed her hand upon my own. I was incapable of resistance. With a word, the import of which I could not understand, I was lifted from the seat which, in all this time, I had occupied. I was conscious of motion—of flight—of a whirling rapidity—but of nothing besides. All then was confusion, until, after a brief interval, the words of the young fairy again fell upon my sense in sounds sweeter than music!

"You would have saved him, and I would serve

you in return. While I dwell on this planet, let me toil for the gentle and deserving. You have wronged, and still continue to wrong, your own nature, and I would bring back your spirit to its better teachings. Look!"

A gorgeous but dimly-burning lamp stood on a table before me. I was in an apartment to which I was a stranger. It was a chamber. A richly-decorated couch rose loftily in its centre, and, as the light flickered more brightly at intervals, I beheld, extended upon it in deep and sweet repose, the form of a beautiful woman. The features are familiar—it is Isabel Beaumont herself—the coquette, the capricious Isabel. Such I thought, and, as such, I feared her. What do I hear? It is my name she has uttered. What delicious tones. Her lips part again—again she utters my name, and coupled too with an association of sentiment so flattering. She loves me!—me, the ennuyé—the discontent—the misanthrope; and, oh! worse than all—the bachelor!

She never looked half so lovely in my eyes before. Her hair wandered in rich profusion, raven-like, glossy, and of the most silken texture, from under her cap, and over a neck white and spotless as the new-fallen snow. The drapery of her dress

had fallen, and I maddened at the prospect. My soul was on fire—my lips bent down instinctively to hers, but before they yet pressed that virgin shrine and mansion of heavenly beauty and deliciousness, I felt the touch of my fairy companion upon my arm. My limbs were nerveless. My head swam—I felt myself again in motion, and knew nothing more, until the close and now oppressive walls of my own room grew familiar to my sight. A single sentence the fairy uttered, with uplifted finger, as she left me—

"You know—you have seen and heard—deal nobly by the maiden—she is worthy of all your love."

XII.

I HAD penetrated into a new world. I was another creature. I had a new life. What now were my emotions—was this new feeling, love? I could not resolve my own doubts. I had no answer to the question which perpetually suggested itself to my sense. I rose a changed man the next morning. My companions had no longer the wonted expression. I shrunk from, I had no further confidence in, them—they could have no sympathy

with me. My thought was only upon the sweet vision I had witnessed the preceding night. Once more I gazed upon that fair picture of sleeping loveliness. Once more the broken murmurs of love which then escaped from her lips, coupled with my own name, inflamed and excited my heart. But was it not all a dream—a fond, a foolish delusion? I grew more and more distracted the more I meditated upon it; until, at length, as night again drew nigh, I sallied forth.

"I will see her," said I; "I will watch her closely. No passion, no prejudice, shall blind me in my examination; and if she look but pensive—if she put on no habit of capricious vagary, I will confide—I will permit myself to—love!"

So I spoke. Fond fool! I was already the slave—the victim of the passion, upon the existence of which I yet presumed to entertain a will!

She was alone—she was sad. How beautiful was she—how much more beautiful than ever, with that unaccustomed sadness. A slight blush (so at least I fancied) mantled her cheek on my appearance, and I became more confident. With a hesitation of manner and speech quite foreign to her wonted ease and dignity, she addressed me, yet with something of the air of *badinage* which had char-

acterized, on her part, our last conversation, a sentence or two of which appears in the first part of our narrative.

"So you are come. You would crave forgiveness, I imagine, for your uncourtly retreat last night, but I shall not forgive you. What! shall we have no sway in our own empire—where all are pleased and proud to do homage, shall one, alone, be permitted to withhold his knee? It cannot be. The refractory knight must be taught obedience—he must learn his duty and our sovereignty."

She smiled, and the tones of her voice, in correspondence with the words she uttered, were intended to be playful and sportive, but I could see the secret effort—the labour of her manner throughout; and, when she ceased speaking, her eyelids dropped, her lips became slightly compressed, and her glance was pensively vacant. Isabel, the capricious Isabel, whose sarcasm I had feared, whose mirth had troubled and terrified me, now appeared in a character entirely new. She was no longer the tyrant—the conqueror. She was herself a captive. Her secret was mine, and mine soon became hers. The college of bachelors was endangered. The pledge which I had made my brethren was soon forgotten in the more attractive influ-

ence of other pledges; and night after night, and hour after hour, of close communion in word and sentiment, only linked me more directly with the beautiful, the sweet creature, of whom I have spoken, in language how inadequate to a due estimate of her thousand attractions.

I had her vow, and she mine. But a few months were required to elapse before our union. In that time, however, we were to be separated—a thousand miles were to intervene. Business called my attention to another region, and we parted, sadly, it is true, but full of hope; without distrust—with no fear, no presentiment.

Sleepless I lay upon my couch in the foreign city of ———. In a week more, and I should commence my homeward journey. In a month, Isabel should be mine. She should sleep in my bosom—the pulses of her young heart should beat in corresponding sympathies with my own. Such were my fancies—such the dreaming mood of my excited spirit. A languor suddenly overspread my senses. I could see and feel, but had no visible motion—no capacity of life. I recognised once more the form of the young fairy before me. Her look was sad; she pressed her hand upon mine, and shook her head with a melancholy slowness,

which had volumes of emphatic meaning in its manner. A sudden tempest passed over the garden; the moon was obscured by clouds; the flowers were prostrate; and, with something of consternation at these shows of nature, I looked round for explanation to where stood the fairy girl, but she had gone. There was something of a strange terror to me in these omens, and I only waited for the daylight to take my departure. I lingered not, on my return, by the way. I hurried to the well-known dwelling—I asked for Isabel—my Isabel—so soon to be mine, at least—and they showed me —her grave.

There was a sweet sympathy in the fortunes of the fairy and the scarcely less spiritual being on whom she attended. A strain of music that night came to my ears, as I mourned in the solitude of my chamber on the desolation of my hopes; and, looking forth from my window, I beheld once more the long procession, and witnessed, for the second time, the melancholy rites which, like our own, distinguish the funeral of the fairy.

THE MENTAL PRISM.

"Life's affluence around us, still we scorn
The flower she brings us, but regard the thorn;
Deny the loveliest beauties of the year,
Baffle the pleasant breeze that comes to cheer,
And murmur o'er life's sultriness :—'tis thus
We make the monsters which do prey on us."

THE MENTAL PRISM.*

I.

We are strange creatures of the element. We take all impressions, and change with the colours upon which we run, like the chameleon. How curiously moulded we are for this sort of susceptibility! How sadly dependant upon the contrasting, if not adverse, influences of sun and shadow! How imperiously do they prescribe, and how naturally do we adopt, our tendencies, under their direction! In the sunshine, we luxuriate with a champaign sort of rapture, which falls little short of madness. In the shadow, how we shiver, sometimes even to loathing, until we begin to think that it would be a matter of but little difficulty to establish the occasional utility and propriety of suicide. Ten minutes bring about a natural change in our mood, without having effected

* The hint for this little paper was found in a pleasant performance, of similar character, written by a modern German.

the slightest change in our condition. A puff of wind puts us in good-humour with ourselves and all mankind. The sun comes out, which had before been shrouded, and a delicate zephyr from the coast of Florida woos us to the arms, and enervates us with the embraces and endearments, of the luxurious summer. An hour shall not pass before we shall have a revolution. A rugged and raw northeaster suddenly invades the territory, and compels us to wrap up in a hundred weight of "fearnaught" and Kamtschatka. We shrink sullenly into our dens, and curse the darkness and the drizzle. A dull chamber receives, a coal fire suffocates us with its unwholesome vapour, and we feel all our generous impulses stifled, just as they were about to set forth on a visit to their neighbours, in good-humour with the sunshine and society. The evil increases. The clouds come down and crowd about us; and, in our dust and dismals, we crouch, with a tiger-like humour, ready to spring upon any victim who shall happen to pass in reach. The next day sees us, like so many lizards, rushing forth the moment the sun makes his appearance, to rest or wriggle in his beams.

II.

THERE is an advantage in all this susceptibility, in spite of its many annoying, but temporary inconveniences. It is not so much a need of the body, as an absolute requisition of the mind, which compels us to recognise and to obey these opposite airs and influences. It might be said, and with truth, that we should never know the sunlight were it not for the cloud,—certainly we should not value it half so much. Pain and pleasure are negative states of existence. The one lives merely by the courteous forbearance of the other. They have estates only at sufferance. Sometimes, indeed, when the stars cease to sing together harmoniously, they become distinct and opposing presences, and array their several forces against each other. Our condition at such times becomes passive, and we are conscious only of uproar and confusion, but not of any more decided feeling. We remain thus, in a state of suspended consciousness, until the fight is over. It seldom lasts long. Pain assembles his forces on the plains of Life, and disputes the field with the opposing armies of Pleasure. The one power brings with

it an ugly array, some of whom we meet with daily. There is Lassitude, and Envy, and morbid Ambition, feverish Discontent, low Desire, selfish Gain, fierce Hate, cold Malignity, and wild Despair—a formidable crew, who are all always busy. On the other hand, Pleasure brings up her array, and their presence is grateful—it brings with it a subdued sunlight—a smile upon nature's face—partaking of the mixed loveliness of light and shadow, neither dazzling with the glare of the one, nor darkening with the gloom of the other. In her train come Animation, Hope, unselfish Confidence, cheerful Ease, devoted Love, modest Decision, and an upward-looking and strong Enthusiasm. On the conflict of these rival powers we depend—according to their successes are our fortunes to be resolved, and we, ourselves, may engage in the conflict, and in most cases decide the victory, according to our choice of party.

III.

THE seemingly opposing influences of sun and shadow are mutual and corresponding agencies, toiling together under a common rule and for an equal benefit, though we can seldom persuade our-

selves so to regard them. By their several and successive exercises, they provoke and stimulate in us a healthy and happy temperament, confirming us in the *juste-milieu*, the only safe course where extremes are busy. The one influence labours with and subdues the other—they form the balance weights of life. Nevertheless, we rush to the extremes, yielding ourselves up to the passing influence, and forgetting all fixed principle. The thousand acknowledge, in this, their natural tendency, which is to light—they fly like motes in the sunbeam, while but one will seek the shade. The majority, in this respect, defer to the great principle which regulates nature, and feed upon and flourish in the light. The eye looks and longs for the sunbeam as anxiously as the lover for his mistress, or the imprisoned bird for the high dominion and the true freedom of the soft and generous air. And yet, how differently is it regarded by men warped by education and society. No two look upon the elements and the seasons through a like medium. The glass which is clear to the one is dim and hazy to the other. Your sun is any thing but mine. Your shade, to me, is monstrous cold, and your woods are wild and repulsive. The stream in which you bathe

for hours with so much delight, and which you consider so delicious, not only has a freezing complexion in my eyes, but seems full of reptiles; and the toads upon the banks are the ugliest things in nature. As for your long rambles by moonlight, and your romantic prospects, they are my utter aversion. Let me illustrate these differences by a little scene which occurred a few days ago.

IV.

THE parties were our friends Walsten and Mordaunt, the very antipodes, as you well know, of each other. We had all ridden out, a company of four, bent on a *maroon* in the woods about the Ship-yard. Two of us, Clifford and myself, rambled off to the old vault that stands on the left of the road, and near the upper creek. You know the place. Walsten and Mordaunt, who, though always disputing, are always together, and in this respect prove the truth of the proverb—Extremes meet,—took a different route, and we did not meet them for an hour after. We had been idling, Clifford and myself, in disjointed chat, until we grew drowsy. I proposed then that we should seek for them. We came upon them just as Walsten had pre-

faced a remark with a pinch of snuff, the sternutatory operation of which, for twenty minutes after, appeared to derange and disorganize his very system of vitality. Our approach did not disturb their dialogue, which was thus continued—Walsten, who is full of enthusiasm, invariably beginning, and stimulating it when it seemed to flag.

V.

Walsten. How beautiful, Mordaunt—how exquisite is the nature around us. How cheering is this sunshine—how renovating its gracious influence. The picture is harmony itself, and the prospect—look, Mordaunt, upon the thousand varieties of green in that forest—each unlike, yet each melting into the hue of that against which it rests, so that a passing glance would never detect the difference. Then look to the creek. The tide is rapidly coming in, the marshes wave and bend to its pressure, and their flat tops show a thousand shades of the same rich and verdant complexion.

Mordaunt. I hate green.

Walsten. See, too, the bay, which spreads itself away in the distance. Behold the schooner now ascending the river, with all sail crowded, and the

sun flickering upon the white canvass in a thousand varying degrees of light.

Mordaunt. Sunlight is no pleasure to me—the glare offends my eye.

Walsten. Sunlight no pleasure! How unnatural —how unholy the thought! Sunlight is one of the greatest gifts that God ever made to the animal. We live only in its influence. There could be no possible substitute for it,—none that would bring with it that wholesome elasticity, which we now derive from no other source. The stir of the day, the buzzing confusion and cheerful hum of employments, are the fruit and the indications of its presence. We follow its guidance—glow with its presence, go abroad and bask in its beams, caparisoned in all our colours of rejoicing; and look, where, under its warming and generous influence, the bird, the insect, the bud, the leaf, the flower, all come forth in song and rapture. Where now are the clouds—the gloom—the silence? Where is the chill—where the heavy languor that oppressed us and discouraged us before? Gone with his glorious presence—gone before his smile of Heaven. The watery clouds are all dispersed, the rains are over, the atmosphere of gloom and chillness has made way for a more benign and invigo-

rating freshness and warmth; and innocence, and beauty, and youth, acknowledge, by a hearty unanimity of smiles, the pure and pleasant feeling of cheerfulness and joy, which its presence not less indicates than inspires. Nor does it come alone to the gay and the light-hearted. To the sad and the sick, to the old and infirm, it carries a welcoming and reviving grace. No bars may shut it out. The prisoner feels it in his dungeon—the slave glows with it in his chains. It descends upon the bosom of the labourer, and the heart leaps more lightly in his, than in the bosom of the monarch, wielding the destinies of a thousand thrones. No earth is denied its presence, and every water is gladdened with its beams. In the deepest wilds of the west, shooting up the mighty and far-stretching Mississippi, in his overburdened pirogue, the bold hunter beholds with rapture its coming splendours, darting through the thick foliage above him, cheering his spirit, and directing his prow. The wanderer in the desert and upon the ocean—the pilgrim, whose feet are wounded by sad travail among the sharp rocks—the exile, with no eye to mark his progress, and no heart to sympathize with his fortunes—all gather from its beaming promise the countenance of an ever-watchful and presiding God. Each

feels, too, that the same beam that warms the wayfarer in the wilderness, blesses the cottage of his boyhood—his heart goes back with it to all his distant affections, and the warmth of that imaginary association gives him renewed courage to pursue his way.

Mordaunt. How tedious and how untrue are all these raptures. The sunshine is, no doubt, a very good thing in its way, but I must confess I do not like it; and you give but a single view of its aspects. You declaim only on its bright side—the sun also has its shadow.

Walsten. How—when?

Mordaunt. You forget to speak of the miasma which it calls up, fatal to human life and happiness, from fen and forest. You say nothing of its burning heats, which invariably give me headache, and frequently fever. You overlook entirely the thousand plagues which it engenders during its summer reign; its flies and its insects, that buzz in your eyes, and fill your throat, and dip their filthy wings and legs in the very dainties you so much delight in.

Walsten. You are an incorrigible monster; nothing gives you pleasure. You quarrel with

every thing and everybody. Does not the wine-cup sometimes offend you?

Mordaunt. Yes, when it has a spider in it. If I look upon things gloomily, Walsten, and distrust the semblance of life more frequently than yourself, it is because my experience is something more than your own. You are for ever describing nature as a rosy-cheeked girl, decked out in her bridal habiliments, and panting with scarcely repressed anticipations at the altar. To me she appears a stale and cunning old maid, bedizened with paint, concealing her yellow complexion—not to speak of the thousand wrinkles that mark her face—and with artificial roses in her no less artificial locks. She is, doubtless, as highly delighted as yourself with a garb and decorations so holyday-like, yet they have been turned and trimmed ten thousand times already for as many persons. That green garment she wore, just so festooned and perfumed, coloured and worshipped, even before the time of Deucalion. For centuries her larders and liquors, her fruits and flowers, have been furnished from the table of death; and the colours of which her cheeks are made have been ground from the decay of her own children, from whose dust comes her dazzle, from whose bones emerge her beauties.

How know we in what company we are now walking? May not this wide arena, spreading and circling us about, be the sepulchral dwelling-place of your ancestors and mine? May not the same winds which bear us the fragrance of yonder myrtles, be impregnated with the ashes of Arminius? Do you not feel it even now in your nostrils? Yon rivulet, from which you are perpetually quaffing, with a delight to me unaccountable, may have, concealed and rotting at the bottom, the bones of your great-grandmother or mine—it matters not which—there is perhaps but little choice now between them. The soul which spoke a philosophy you hold so fine in the scull of Socrates, the spirit that prompted the fine visions of Plato, may even now give life to yon reeling follower of Sardanapalus. The transition, be assured, is not great, from the high and dreamy morality of the one, to the voluptuous theory which taught the abuse of the present hour in apprehension of its loss. Is the picture a comic one, that your laughter grows irrepressible? I see nothing to occasion merriment.

Walsten. Pardon me, Mordaunt, but I do. Your phiz and philosophy alike are irresistibly comic, and suggest some farther speculations in a

corresponding humour. How, if our bodies, according to the notion you entertain of the soul, should undertake, in a like manner, to wander through an infinity of ages? What if, after death, they are compelled to continue the same functions, though perhaps in a different form and figure, as when under the guidance and direction of a soul?

Mordaunt. What draw you from your proposition? I am not quick-witted, you are aware—you must provide me with steps to your problems.

Walsten. Do you hear the melody of the bird which sings over us? It is not a melody, perhaps, in your ears, but you hear it?

Mordaunt. I do; it has been croaking in concert with yourself for the last half hour, and with as little method.

Walsten. May she not have arisen from the urn of Tibullus, whose song was as loving as hers? Having won his spirit, she deserts his tomb, and repeats the tender melodies which he taught in life to humanity. Perhaps a Pindar soars triumphantly, in the form of yon towering eagle, to the communion of the blue heavens. Some atom of the rose-lipped Anacreon may prompt the wanton zephyr which so audaciously stirs the ringlets of yon bright-eyed damsel; and, to be more minute,

for your satisfaction, who knows that the bodies of extravagant lovers are not now flying, in subtile flakes of hair-powder, through the locks of their surviving mistresses? Will you pretend to say, having your theory seriously at heart, that the doubly-dried bones of the dead usurer are not now chained down in the rust of a hundred years over the money-chests he so loved in life, and yet left, unenjoyed, behind him? Nor should this species of retributive justice be withheld from all other kinds of offenders. Would it indicate an inappropriateness of justice, were the bodies of those in life afflicted with that worst madness of all, the *cacoethes scribendi*, transmuted into types, and woven into goodly reams of foolscap, doomed to groan for ever under the printing-press, which they so often made to groan in eternalizing, along with their own, the nonsense of their predecessors? To search farther in these analogies, my dear Mordaunt, would be to find you, some hundred years hence, wailing with the melancholy whippoorwill in the seclusion of the swamps of Okephanokee.

Mordaunt. Will you never be serious, Walsten; not even in your examination of the mysteries of truth and nature? How do you propose to make any discoveries, with your intellect perpetually convulsed with laughter?

Walsten. True; in such a situation and mood, I should do little towards the attainment of knowledge; but, with as much reason may I ask, what can be the extent of your progress in the same labour if your eyes are perpetually obscured with tears?

Mordaunt. Your philosophy would be a strange one, indeed, if the nature of things, and the existence of truth, which should be immutable, were susceptible to such influences as spring from the sad or merry heart or countenance? Shall wisdom become a pawnbroker, and accommodate her stores to the necessities or the humours of her neighbours? At this rate, a jaded stomach will destroy a people; a pampered appetite overturn a dynasty; a glass of wine give immortality and adoration to a gang of highwaymen. If, in our pursuit of philosophy, so much depends upon our humours, I shall be glad to know in what mood you propose to set out in your search after truth? For my part, I am at a loss to see in what respects the gloom of my habit unfits me, any more than the mirth of yours, to undertake the search.

Walsten. Not more, perhaps: the extremes touch, but at points equally foreign from the proposed object. They are both, perhaps, equally

obstacles in the way of our search, inasmuch as they give their complexion to, and necessarily alter that of, the things we survey. We see through a false medium, and see nothing rightly. The glass is dark with you and dazzling with me, and both of us are blind in consequence. If, however, yours be the preferable mood for the search after truth and the acquirement of wisdom, I should prefer to be perpetually at fault. I would not willingly be wise, or even happy, on such conditions.

Mordaunt. Happy! that is another of the slang words which, without any definite signification, the herd of public teachers and common hearers so frequently employ. Pray, what do you mean by happiness, and by what process do you propose to attain it? Labour, you say, is the condition of life; wisdom its purpose or mean, and happiness its reward. Miserable delusion! superstition worse than Egyptian! calf worship, bull worship, snake worship! You see, momentarily, thousands and thousands of men and women spreading their gala sails on the summer day and sea in the silly pursuit. Happiness dwells, say they, a queenly beauty, on that bright and blessed island. There they go, fleet after fleet, whirling in the unavoida-

ble and necessary circle; coming back for ever to the point from which they departed, or battered to pieces on rocks and quicksands. Of the survivers of the gang, in reference to their destination and its attainment, you may well exclaim, *apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.* You see them, after a long and fruitless labour, swimming to the shore with difficulty, or carried down the stream to the unreturning floods of eternity. This is the pursuit of happiness; and these are they, poor adventurers, that worship and seek for the coy divinity, whose existence is in their diseased and morbidly foolish fancies alone.

Walsten. You describe truly the pursuits of the erring, and I am not ready to deny that such are the majority of mankind, since the sole aim of life is to learn how to live.

Mordaunt. To die, rather.

Walsten. Well, to die, if you prefer it. But it does not follow, because men take the wrong road to the temple, that it does not therefore exist. To this the lawyers would unhesitatingly say, *non sequitur.* But, before giving you my idea of the what and whereabouts of happiness, permit me to ask, even if these mariners fail in reaching the

port proposed, has the voyage itself no beneficial results, no advantages?

Mordaunt. None that I see—unless, perhaps, you refer to the pleasures of viewing what small poets and painters call a fine landscape, in the teeth of storms, and seas, and shipwrecks, and death. If such a prospect sufficiently compensates to your mind the privations, perils, and perplexities that come with it, I am free to say, your notion of human happiness and mine—if I have any—most essentially differ.

Walsten. They certainly do. The pursuit has something in it, as it relieves that monotony of existence which necessarily comes with a life such as yours, passed without risk or excitement; and, if the adventurers do miss the main end of their embarcation, they occasionally make out to acquire something which, in part, rewards them. All the views of men are generally extravagant; and they perhaps do well in the way of trade—putting it on the most business footing we can—if their returns for their adventures reach to one half the amount of their proposed profits. Shall I, my friend, failing to find the rose of my search, reject the violet which offers itself to my hand? Shall I quarrel with the choicest airs of May, because a

thunder-cloud sometimes conflicts with them? The day is beautiful now, but to-morrow it may be stormy. Shall I brood over the contingency in gloomy anticipations, while I utterly disregard the pleasure in my grasp?

Mordaunt. Pleasure again. Can you never speak without the employment of words having no distinct idea? But you promised me a definition of what people mean by the phrase—happiness. I would see what is the stuff out of which you propose to make it.

Walsten. I promised you my notion, and not that of anybody else. That I am willing to bestow upon you, in the hope of its doing something to make you more contented with your neighbour and yourself.

Mordaunt. You are charitable, at least, and I cannot do less than pay all attention. Proceed.

Walsten. The leading error, then, to my mind, under which the great human mass appear to labour in the search after, and desire for, happiness, is the proposing to themselves the pursuit of some one single object. At the commencement of life most men set out with this distinct proposition in view. They choose some prominent and select road—aim at some individual goal and object—

perhaps difficult of access, and even the attainment of which only proves the real object of desire as far off and utterly unapproachable as ever.

Mordaunt. This is what I have always said. In what do you propose to amend the error of the herd?—where lies the difficulty—the mistake—with them?

Walsten. The mistake lies in the proposition itself, since no single pursuit in life can be carried on, unmet by controlling and counteracting circumstances, which continually thwart and divert from the course, and, in the end, most commonly compel us to leave it. Of course, you know, that human happiness, under such influences, must be of a nature subject to many qualifications—since hope, one of the prime incentives to human impulse, presupposes a certain discontent with the present condition, and a desire for its change, in one or many respects—a feeling directly averse to that Arcadian felicity and undisturbed content which form, in the beau ideal of the poets, the state and quality of genuine happiness. It is not of this condition that I would speak. The happiness of man, such as he should seek in this life, is a state of hopes and cravings, as free from contingencies as they can be made consistently with his own and the nature of

things around him. Such a state, it appears to me, is rather the consequence of a successful and harmonious combination of circumstances, than the overcoming of any one difficulty, or the successful search after, and attainment of, any given end or object—the acquisition of such a temper of content, as, without rejecting the presence of an active and unsleeping hope, at least takes from it all unreasonable and exaggerated elevation of aim; and, if not of easy attainment, is, at least, not likely, in the event of defeat, to leave the mind in a state of morbid and diseased prostration. Such a mood can only arise in the mind by a careful economy of the affections and the emotions: a close consideration of what is worthy of, and available in, pursuit. Indeed, it is in happiness as in money-making—you must take care of the sixpences if you want to have control over and to make use of the pounds. Proposing to ourselves a moderate aim, we are neither so liable to overthrow, nor apt to feel it so sensibly. The life of the child is made up of the momentary and occasional pursuit of trifles; and his enjoyments—I may say his happiness—for the time, depends entirely upon his success in their pursuit. Men, if we analyze them closely, are but children of a larger growth and

more advanced period, and call for toys simply increased in proportion to their years; and, I take it, that a close and economical attention to the little things of life, would be far more likely to result in the due attainment of the object of desire, than any single plan which the mind may propose. And for a very obvious reason. The man who has spent twenty years of his life in the pursuit of one road to happiness, is very apt, when he discovers himself in a desert, and the delusive *oasis* retreating from his eyes as remotely far as ever, to lie down despondingly and die. He despairs of success—he dreads to retrace his steps—indeed, he cannot—and, if he diverges into other paths, he only involves himself in intricacies which baffle him at last, and do not alter the destiny, so liable to overthrow, which he himself has chosen. There is a way to avoid all this. My path is a safer one by far; and, though it may lead to no visionary condition of life, the attainment of which would subtract all the charms from heaven itself, at least it can result in no dreadful and soul-mastering disappointments and defeats. We should be careful to make every thing—the humblest thing in nature—minister to the felicity of the moment. If the beauty and scent of this flower gratify, however slightly, a solitary sense,

why should I trample it unenjoyed under my foot? If yon purple-coated cloud wins my eye and kindles my fancy, let me survey it. Does the breeze come about me with a sense of freshness, I throw open my vest to its embraces. I reject nothing that soothes the excited pulse—that cheers the wandering hope—that invigorates the saddened spirit. So, with an eye to the employment, in the negative, of a corresponding doctrine, I avoid all contact and communion with those things which are likely to become offensive to me. I avoid the thorn which wounds—the storm which terrifies—the gloom which palls. Nor do I rest here. I would carefully gather up and regulate my own emotions. I would set a high value upon them, far beyond the market standard of the mass. I would lock them up as I would a treasure, which, in the long winter nights, with the bright fire blazing before me, and a glad circle gathered round, I would count over and contemplate. My heart should be a capacious storehouse, in which I would garner up all the impulses—the humblest and wildest wanderings of my senses. The great mass of men neglect all these, and regard them as the merest trifles. They aim at the attainment of the mountain, overlooking entirely the atoms of

which it may be made. They set forth, unfortunately, with some very brilliant and inviting illusion before them; and when, upon their approach, it vanishes, they come to the conclusion, as you have done, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and that the object is nowhere to be found; when, as is most generally the case, their ill success is entirely attributable to their own idle, extravagant conceptions and misdirected toils.

Mordaunt. This is speculation and conjecture, not philosophy. The experience of the world itself, not less than my own, is decidedly against you. For the single grain of enjoyment that falls among rocks and in barren places, there spring up, luxuriantly, a thousand bitter plants of grief and vexation. For the smile of joy, the human eye articulates a thousand sorrows. Do groups of the living gather around us—myriads of the once living are crowded beneath us. The dancer whirls along in gladness, while the worm perishes under his feet. "PAST—PAST," is written upon all things which meet my eye, and mingle in with my spirit. A requiem and a wail of death come to me in every breeze.

Walsten. Incorrigible Mordaunt! will nothing bring you to reason? Would you not smile and

rejoice, when I say to you, that beneatn the sheltering branches of this aged oak, I embraced for the first time my beloved Constance?

Mordaunt. Walsten, Walsten, under this very tree the maid of my heart lies buried!

VI.

THE discussion was fairly concluded with these words. Walsten had nothing more to say. He was silenced, though not convinced. Indeed, how could he be? The force of the argument lay entirely with him. Mordaunt had argued for the million from the fortunes of the one. He made his own the standard by which he determined that of the many; and hopeless, now, of the one hope which had been to him in the place of all, he preferred rather to mourn over his great loss, to the acquisition of any new, and, probably, equally worthy treasure. To sorrow at the grave of the perished was sweeter to him, under the morbid mood which at that time governed him, than to rejoice in the smiles and beauties of any living love.

VII.

Let us now generalize a little. In the argument which we have heard carried on between the two friends, we have seen that all of their illustrations and comparisons, pro and con, were taken from the objects and images moving and living in the natural world around them. They did not reason from any mental abstractions. This fact, not dwelt upon by either, perhaps not perceived by them at all, has in itself a strong argument illustrative of the subject. The moral world does not refer sufficiently often to the natural for authorities. This is greatly to be regretted. We should be much wiser, much better, much happier if it did so. The vicissitudes of the one, and its general aspects, are entirely analogous to those which affect the destinies of the other. Man is subject equally to storm and sunshine; and the passions and the affections, the hopes and the fears, are, to him, as the clouds and the light, the dews and the heat, to the natural objects which he cherishes, and from which his heart derives its pleasures. Their relations and duties are grateful or disagreeable, as they are kept subordinate, or unchained for revo-

lution. They minister to and make his nature,—as the tempest and the breeze, the dew and the heavy hurricane, severally affect the growth and quality of the trees and the flowers about him. He too, from their operation, has his long rainy days—his equinoctial storms, and his tropical vapours—his moody clouds of abstraction, that hang about the horizon of the mind, until it seems to be almost without light, indicating the absence rather than the agency of the elements. His calms fetter—his zephyrs exhilarate—and he maddens with natural joy at the reappearance, after a long interval of tempest, of the bright and blessing sunlight. It is then that he rejoices in a kindred feeling with the inanimate nature around him. All things, in his mood of revelry, are things in the sunshine. The clouds rest no longer on the object which is loved; but a visible glory, unapproachable and unmatchable, is on its march before his eyes, through the broad, and blue, and beautiful expanse; while he sees, with the naked eye, supreme and present, in every object in his contemplation, the immortal and lovely principle—that God himself, from whom they all have being, moving ever onward with a countenance beaming still with benignity and grace.

VIII.

With Mordaunt, whose spirit is untuned, and may not harmonize with the universal nature, the earth is a mere ball of blight and bitumen, and the skies that he beheld, and atmosphere which he breathed, a collection of the most pestilential vapours. Yet was he no less moved by the aspect of external things than his neighbour Walsten. He was not less a dependant than was the latter. But he lacked the other's flexibility—he lacked the flexibility of the natural world around him. He treasured up the cloud too long and too earnestly—he refused, as long as he could, the influence of the sunlight. He erred in this respect, since, though we are not to be unmoved by the caprices of the seasons and the time, we are not to yield to them the entire mental control which we have over ourselves. We are not, and should not suffer ourselves, to become the mere creatures of that chance combination which we call circumstances—depending, for fixed rules and final results, upon atmosphere, light, shade, and their various associations. We are rather, or should be, the agents of our own hopes—of our loves—of our mind's direction—of

our proper and well-governed amb[illegible]. The very nature of the change going on hourly around us, sufficiently proves that, in our allotment, we are to be taught, not governed, by its operations. We are always our own sole, high, and responsible directors. As the elements of the natural world seem to obey the impulses which first bade the stars and the seasons to rejoice harmoniously in their courses, and even as all other portions and members of the world which lie before us seem to acknowledge a same moving and impelling will, so may feeling, thought, action, and the fruits of these, as joy and pain, be controlled and directed according as we require and decree. The will to have them obey, and to say how, is only necessary; and feeling, action, thought, enjoyment—whether of pain or pleasure, good or evil—are at once under our control. Mind may sometimes take its colour, but should never be permitted to take its character, from the cloud. The cloud, on the contrary, where the mind becomes not diseased by its own misdirection, should rather receive the hues, solemn or bright, which it wears, from the eye which beholds it. It is only the diseased spirit with whom it is otherwise. The strong man may become grave momentarily with the brown and

sombre visage of autumn, but he is never depressed by its presence into gloom. Labouring under no moral perversion, and with a heart strong in its truth, and in the indulgence of proper hopes, it matters but little to such a man though the cloud overhangs the city, and the bird, flying to the cover of the silent forest, forgets all his songs of rejoicing. He does not despond or droop at such a period. There is consolation and promise enough for him in the experience of ages. He knows that

> "——the darkest day,
> Wait till to-morrow, will have passed away."

END OF VOL. I.

H.S.

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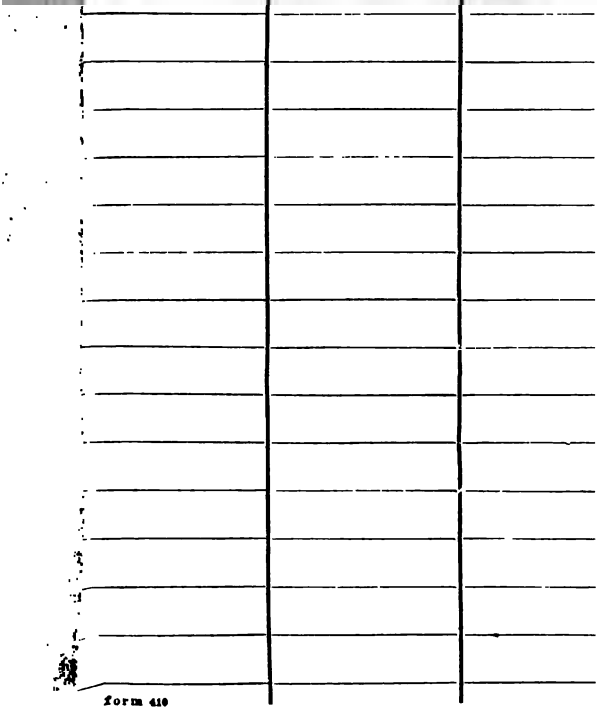

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